Global financial task force rejects RP dirty money law

Story below, Col. 1

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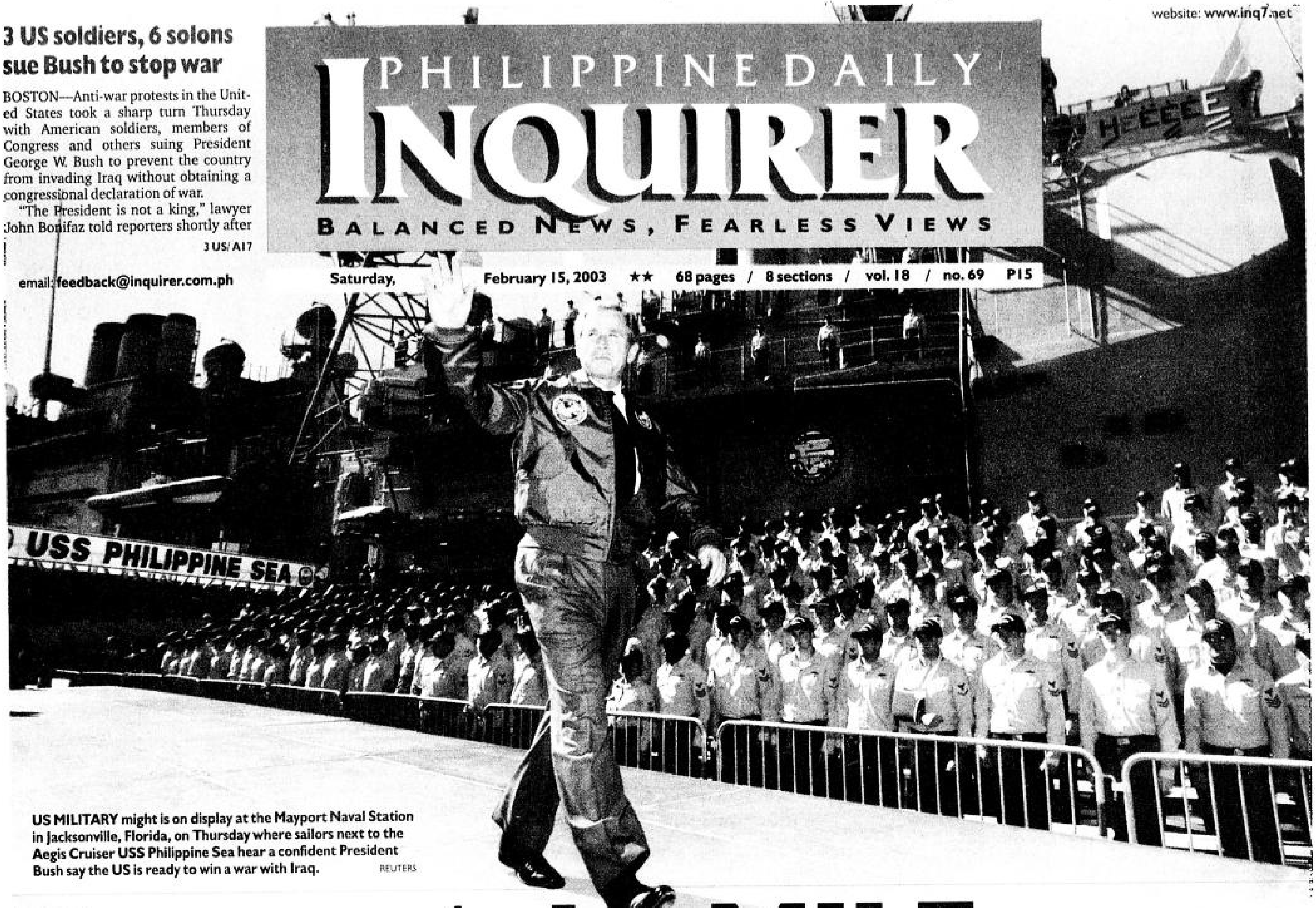
Saturday, February 15, 2003 ★★ 68 pages / 8 sections / vol. 18 / no. 69 P15

3 US soldiers, 6 solons sue Bush to stop war

BOSTON—Anti-war protests in the United States took a sharp turn Thursday with American soldiers, members of Congress and others suing President George W. Bush to prevent the country from invading Iraq without obtaining a congressional declaration of war.

"The President is not a king," lawyer John Bonifaz told reporters shortly after

3 US/A17



US MILITARY might is on display at the Mayport Naval Station in Jacksonville, Florida, on Thursday where sailors next to the Aegis Cruiser USS Philippine Sea hear a confident President Bush say the US is ready to win a war with Iraq. REUTERS

Troops take MILF camp

By the PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Martin Marfil *in Manila*

GOVERNMENT forces captured a Moro Islamic Liberation Front stronghold inside the 200-hectare Buliok complex late Thursday—bringing them a step closer to what may be their real military objective: capturing MILF chair Hashim Salamat.

Armed Forces spokesperson Col. Essel Soriano said yesterday the AFP will try its best to capture Salamat, whom Soriano described as a "high-value target for the Armed Forces considering that he has been in the area" since the fighting began on Tuesday.

The military campaign launched its offensive on the Buliok complex inside the Liguasan Marsh after it accused the MILF of harboring the Pentagon gang kidnappers, terrorist bombers and other outlaws.

Despite what the AFP called stiff resistance, government troops overran the key camp of Kabasalan near Pikit town in North Cotabato at about 8 p.m. the other day.

Col. Carduzo Luna, head of the Army's 602nd Infantry

GOVERNMENT/A4

UN inspectors report key to war or peace

THE UN Security Council began a crucial long-awaited meeting late last night that will determine whether the United Nations will back the US-British plan to attack Iraq.

Diplomats said the top UN arms inspectors were likely to report to the powerful council that Iraq has not fully cooperated with disarmament demands—but refrain from saying that Baghdad has utterly failed to comply, as the United States wants.

The language used by chief inspector Hans Blix and his colleague in charge of nuclear arms, Mohamed ElBaradei, will be key in determining whether wavering council members call for further inspections or back US-British plans for an invasion of Iraq.

"We're expecting a mixed bag," said a senior Bush administration official.

UN's nuclear weapons expert, preparing to give a crucial report to the Security Council on Friday, said inspections should continue for months because "we are moving forward."

Blix and ElBaradei are expected to say that Iraq is developing new

UN/A20

Amla rejected; sanctions start on March 15

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan
and Clarissa S. Batino

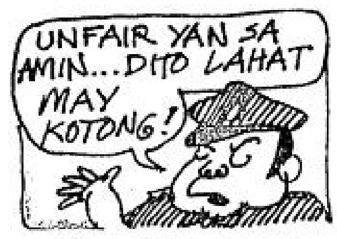
THE PARIS-BASED Financial Action Task Force (FATF) yesterday said it has "taken the serious step of recommending that its 29 member-countries impose additional countermeasures" against the Philippines for failing to address "deficiencies" in its dirty money law.

But in a statement, the FATF also agreed to give the Philippines until March 15 to implement tougher dirty money legislative amendments.

The global financial watchdog, sponsored by the Group of Seven industrialized nations, blacklists countries seen as not doing enough to block the flow of dirty money.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed finance officials to coordinate

AMLA/A17


UNFAIR YAN SA AMIN...DITO LAHAT MAY KOTONG!

Mexico cops issue receipts for bribes

METRO Manila's *kotong* cops will weep in envy.

A surreal world of bribery etiquette exists in Mexico City. Police officers issue receipts for bribes from motorists to ensure that no other cop can pull them over and ask for another bribe.

This strange, elegant ballet of

MEXICO/A19

Bush to visit Manila in October

By Jennie L. Ilustre
PDI Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush will visit the Philippines in October when he attends the leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference in Bangkok.

Ernest Z. Bower, president of the US-Asean Business Council composed of top American corporations doing business in Southeast Asian Nations, relayed this information to the INQUIRER at the Feb. 12 launch of the Philippine Caucus in the Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill.

Last year during Bush's tour of Asia, the White House turned down repeated requests for him to visit the Philippines even for just an airport stopover.

In his speech at the launch of the

BUSH/A19

Danding: I don't want it but if duty calls...

By Juliet L. Javellana
and Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

"I DON'T want it but if duty calls, who am I to refuse?"

This was the response of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to a petition signed by 50 Lakas congressmen asking him to be their standard-bearer in 2004, Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Paras, provincial chair of Lakas in Negros Oriental, presented the Lakas petition to Cojuangco yesterday morning in his office at San Miguel Corp. where he is chair and chief executive officer.

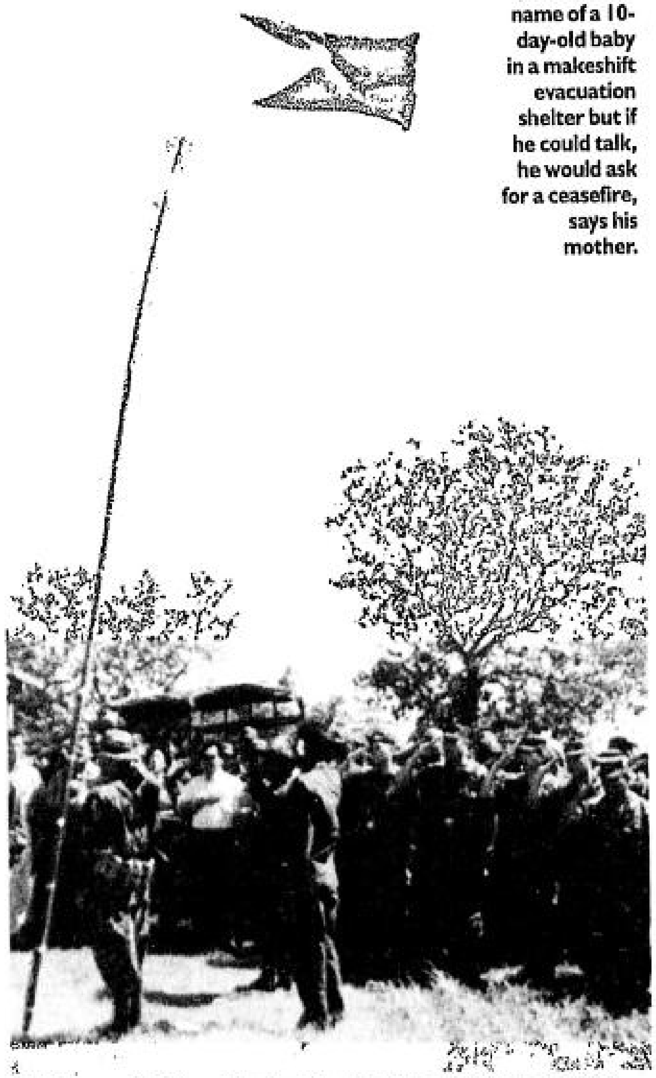
In Bacolod City, Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday confirmed that the names of Cojuangco and Raul Roco were endorsed as possible presidential candidates in the 2004 elections during a close door meeting of the Lakas-CMD in January.

But he said President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked the Lakas-CMD members to put off their decisions until the end of the year.

"The President has asked us to look within the party and at the end of year if we do not find a standard-bearer we can look for one from within our political coalition," he said.

"The President asked that we collectively

DANDING/A17



"REAL heroes," Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes calls the troops of the 39th Infantry Battalion during flag raising rites after they seized Kabasalan

PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

JIHAD is the name of a 10-day-old baby in a makeshift evacuation shelter but if he could talk, he would ask for a ceasefire, says his mother.

Baby named 'Jihad' one of 51,000 evacuees

By Rosa-May V. de Guzman
PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Volt Contreras *in Manila*

PIKIT, North Cotabato—His name calls for a holy war, but this baby wants peace.

Ten-day-old Jihad is one of the thousands of children who had to leave their homes with their families to avoid being caught in the crossfire of the Buliok complex offensive. His mother, Fatima Ampatuan, sought refuge in a makeshift abode in Barangay Batulawan in this town.

Fatima, 19, recalled that when the military entered their village on Feb. 7 looking for Pentagon gang kidnappers, she packed the few possessions she had and whispered to Jihad: "There's war."

Fatima and Jihad are among the tens of thousands of evacuees who have fled the terror-stricken villages in North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat provinces.

They have quickly outnumbered the "boat people" deported from Sabah, Malaysia, last year, Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman of the Department of Social

BABY/A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2003

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/15/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Cabuyao police chief shot dead

By TJ Burgonio and Romulo Ponte
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE POLICE chief of Cabuyao, Laguna, was yesterday shot dead by four armed men as he was driving on a road in Silang town in Cavite in what police believe may be an offshoot of a private land dispute.

Supt. Eriberto Paglinawan died instantly from three gunshot wounds to his head and shoulders, Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, the provincial police director said.

Paglinawan was ambushed in Barangay Lumil at about 8 a.m. as he was driving home to Barangay Munting Ilog in Silang after completing a 24-hour duty, police colleagues said.

According to investigators, Paglinawan was slowing down as he approached a hump in Barangay Lumil when the gunmen opened fire.

Empty shells from .45 cal. and 9mm pistols were recovered from the scene of the ambush, police said.

"Some witnesses had seen the gunmen, but they could not identify them. Obviously, the suspects were not residents in the area," said Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera, the police director for Laguna.

The four gunmen escaped by commandeering a Toyota Corolla service vehicle of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA). The car was later found abandoned in Barangay Hoyo, a kilometer away from the ambush site.

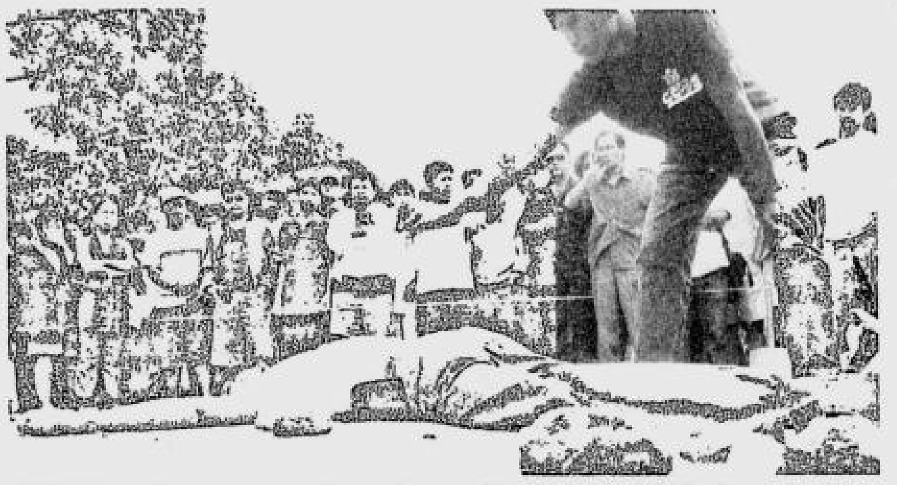
Rosales hinted that investigators were looking into a land dispute between Paglinawan family and another family in Silang as one of the possible motives.

"There was a family feud," Rosales said in a phone interview, recalling that Paglinawan's policeman-brother, Nicasio, was also ambushed in Pasig in 1992 for the same reason.

It was not immediately known if Nicasio's killing has been solved.

Corvera said the dispute concerned a property in Barangay Munting Ilog where the Paglinawan family resides. He did not provide other details.

Some police officials were quick to rule out the involvement of the New People's Army in the police officer's ambush.



SUPT. Eriberto Paglinawan sprawled on the ground: Family feud or NPA justice?

"The area is clear of rebels because it's near the PNPA. There are ongoing bivouacs there right now so the rebels never dare to go near," said Rosales.

The role of the NPA in Paglinawan's ambush could not be ruled out, however, said Corvera, who pointed out that the police chief had been active in the anti-insurgency drive.

Cabuyao municipal executive assistant, Rumuel Batallones, pointed to some talk that Paglinawan's active involvement in the various labor conflicts in the area, particularly the Nestlé labor problem, may have been a factor in his murder.

"They said perhaps some elements in the NPA were irked by (Paglinawan's) active peacekeeping involvement in the conflicts between the workers and the company management in which he was misunderstood as being too pro-management," Batallones said.

According to a privileged speech that Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran delivered on Oct. 9, 2002, at the height of a labor dispute at Nestlé's Cabuyao plant, Paglinawan allegedly headed a team that violently dispersed a strike of about 400 workers and their supporters on June 3, 2002. *With a report from Fausto Tatad Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

It's back to sanity with 'back to English' approach

By C. Avendaño

THE RESTORATION of English as the country's tool of instruction will restore the "sanity in our language program" given what a Cebuano lawmaker says is the "clear signs of the miserable grasp of the average Filipino on English."

Cebu Rep. Jose Gullas said that President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to shift to English as a medium of instruction will likely see the improvement of the quality of Philippine education.

In a five-page statement, Gullas said that Philippine education has deteriorated since English was dropped as medium of instruction in 1974.

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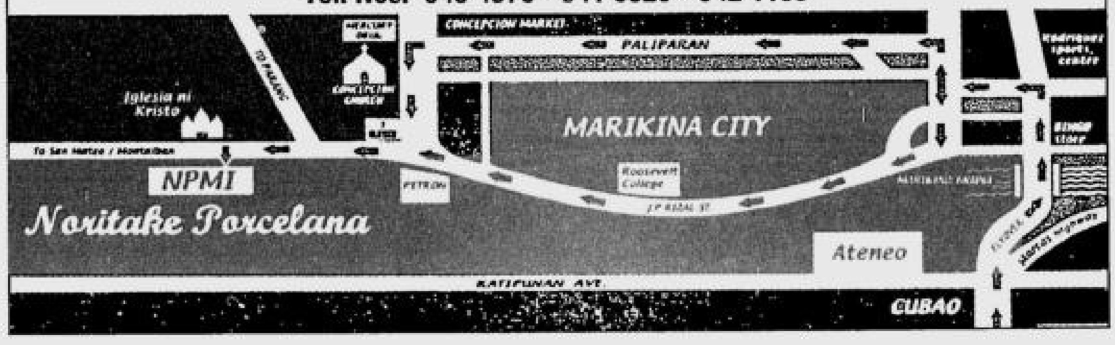

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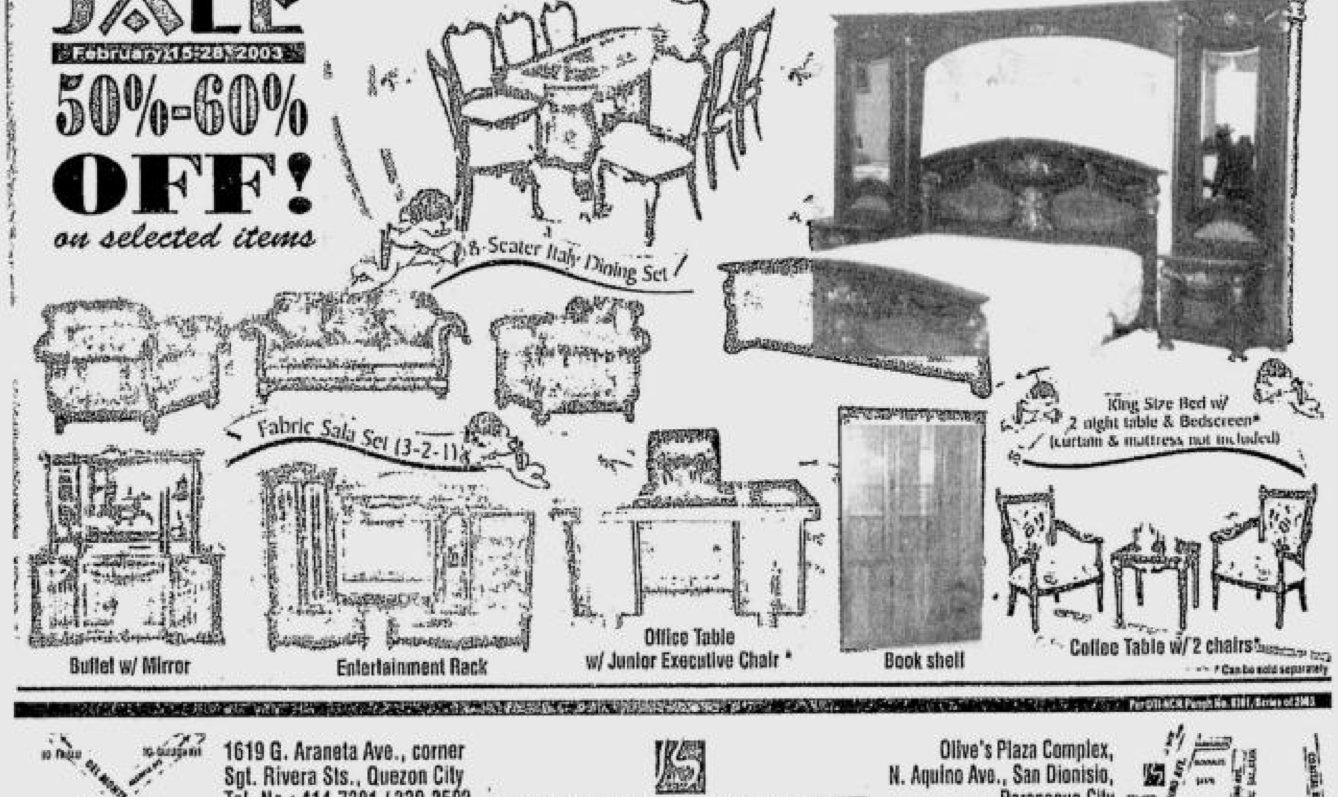

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Comelec cites flaws in absentee voting law

By Blanche Rivera

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday pointed out the flaws of the day-old Absentee Voting law, saying it would be very difficult to implement overseas voting unless the Comelec's recommendations are approved.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said that the law's mandate to set up voting precincts in all 102 countries hosting Filipinos was "impractical."

Abalos said he has been asking the bicameral committee to provide for the clustering of countries so as not to waste time and resources in places where there are very few overseas Filipino workers.

"But Congress was stubborn. I have told them a lot of times already that we should do clustering," Abalos said in a phone interview yesterday.

He said that the Absentee Voting law that was signed by the President Thursday mandated the Comelec to set up voting precincts in all countries with Filipinos.

One Pinoy each

Places like the British Virgin Island, Cocos Island, Kiribati, Liechtenstein, St. Kitts Nevis, Slovenia and Wake Island have only one registered Filipino each.

There are 23 more countries which host less than 10 Filipinos each, according to the stock estimate of OFWs used by the bicameral committee.

"Should we go and set up voting precincts in each of those countries?" Abalos said, adding that it would be cheaper and more efficient by mail.

"But they said the law is law so we have to follow it," he said. Later, however, he said there might be no voting in such places with very few Filipinos if the oversight committee does not heed the Comelec's recommendations.

Only 87 of the 102 countries have Philippine consulates and embassies. Only three countries—Japan, United Kingdom, Canada—would do voting by mail.

The Comelec committee on absentee voting headed by Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco is still drafting the implementing rules and regulations for the overseas voting.

Erap man called to plunder trial on 'Boracay'

By Volt Contreras

JOSE Luis Yulo, the housing czar of jailed ex-president Estrada, has been ordered to appear at the Sandiganbayan plunder trial next week as the court weighs a petition from state prosecutors to conduct an "ocular inspection" of the controversial "Boracay" mansion.

Yulo is the president of St. Peter Holdings Corp., the company that claims to own the P142-million property in Quezon City which prosecutors allege is part of the wealth that Estrada illegally amassed during his short-lived term.

Yulo and other SPHC officials are to appear before the Sandiganbayan on Feb. 19.

One of Estrada's mistresses, former actress Laarni Enriquez, occupied the property for a certain period in 2000 until it was exposed in the media, adding to the scandals that helped to fuel the anti-Estrada opposition.

When court sheriffs last year went to the mansion to carry out the court's freeze order on the assets of "Jose Velarde," Estrada's alleged banking alias, private guards and caretakers of the now empty mansion claimed to be employees of St. Peter.

As far back as November 2000, Yulo had claimed ownership of the mansion, though clarifying that he merely held it in trust as a "nominee-partner" of businessman Jaime Dichaves, another Estrada crony.

The place was dubbed "Boracay" because of its main design feature—a swimming pool made to look like a beach and equipped with a wave-making machine with white sand brought in from the famous resort in Aklan.

Prosecutors have asked the special Sandiganbayan division trying Estrada to go see for themselves how the once opulent property "has been stripped of its furnishings and effectively abandoned in an effort to hide the identity of its true owner."

Prosecutors recalled that their star witness, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson pointed to Estrada as the owner of the Boracay residence.

Further testimonies by Christine Marie Tabo of the Bank of the Philippine Islands and Lamberto de Fonso of the Equitable PCIBank also showed that the mansion had been purchased using funds from the "Jose Velarde" account.

Negotiator headed for Utrecht with peace plan

GOVERNMENT peace negotiators will meet leaders of the communist-led National Democratic Front in the Netherlands early next week for "exploratory talks" in a bid to revive peace talks that have been stalled for nearly two years.

Silvestre Bello III, the chair of the government peace panel, will hand over a proposed final peace agreement approved last month by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to NDF leaders who are living in exile in the Dutch city of Utrecht.

Bello said the draft covers the "substantive" agenda earlier agreed upon by the two sides: respect for human rights, economic and social reforms, political and constitutional reforms and disposition of armed forces.

"There is not much difference between our draft and the NDF's 10-point program of government. This shows that the government is really serious in addressing the root causes of the communist insurgency," he said.

"We hope to convince our counterparts to agree to negotiate a final peace agreement and end the 34-year insurgency," said Bello who leaves on Monday with Silvestre Afable, the head of the Presidential Management Staff.

He said he would propose to his NDF counterparts that negotiations be wrapped up in six months should the government's draft accord be acceptable as a starting point for talks.

Bello said Norway was willing to host formal negotiations once the process resumes.

In her Valentine's Day message, the President said that she had directed the team to "touch base" with the NDF leaders for the "purpose of resuming peace negotiations."

The President said that the talks would be conducted "within the framework of our Constitution."

"I have asked this team to deliver the Republic's draft for a final peace agreement to the NDF to jumpstart what I hope will be a speedier peace process," Ms Macapagal said.

The government suspended formal negotiations with the NDF, the political umbrella of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, in June 2001 after NPA assassins killed a former congressman and intelligence officer.

The peace talks in 1986 to 1987 under President Aquino collapsed after government troops killed 13 farmers demanding land reform in a rally near Malacañang.

Bello said the peace proposal includes only one agreement, unlike the previous four.

"Our draft peace agreement contains the fundamental reform measures that we believe address the root causes of the armed conflict. Since they (the communists) are also interested in reforms, this should be acceptable to them," he said.

Under the draft proposal, a copy of which was seen by the Associated Press, the government would offer "absolute and unconditional" amnesty to the guerrillas, except those who have commited crimes unrelated to the insurgency.

In exchange, the rebels should disband the NPA and surrender their weapons. Livelihood would be provided to the guerrillas and a six-month ceasefire would take effect when the accord is signed. *Carlito Pablo and AP*

USC Boys High '78 reunion

THE UNIVERSITY of San Carlos Boy's High School of Cebu City Batch '78 will be holding their 25th Year Grand Reunion on March 29-30 at the USBC-BHC Gymnasium. Batch members are requested to contact any of the following: Secretariat—(0916)5145884; Gigi Ilaya—(0917)3221912; Edgar Pe Benito—(0916)3930703; Boogie Tuano—(02)9158550 (Manila) or (0917) 8178031.

The Secretariat is appealing to everyone who knows the whereabouts of USC-BHS '78 alumni to inform them of the affair.

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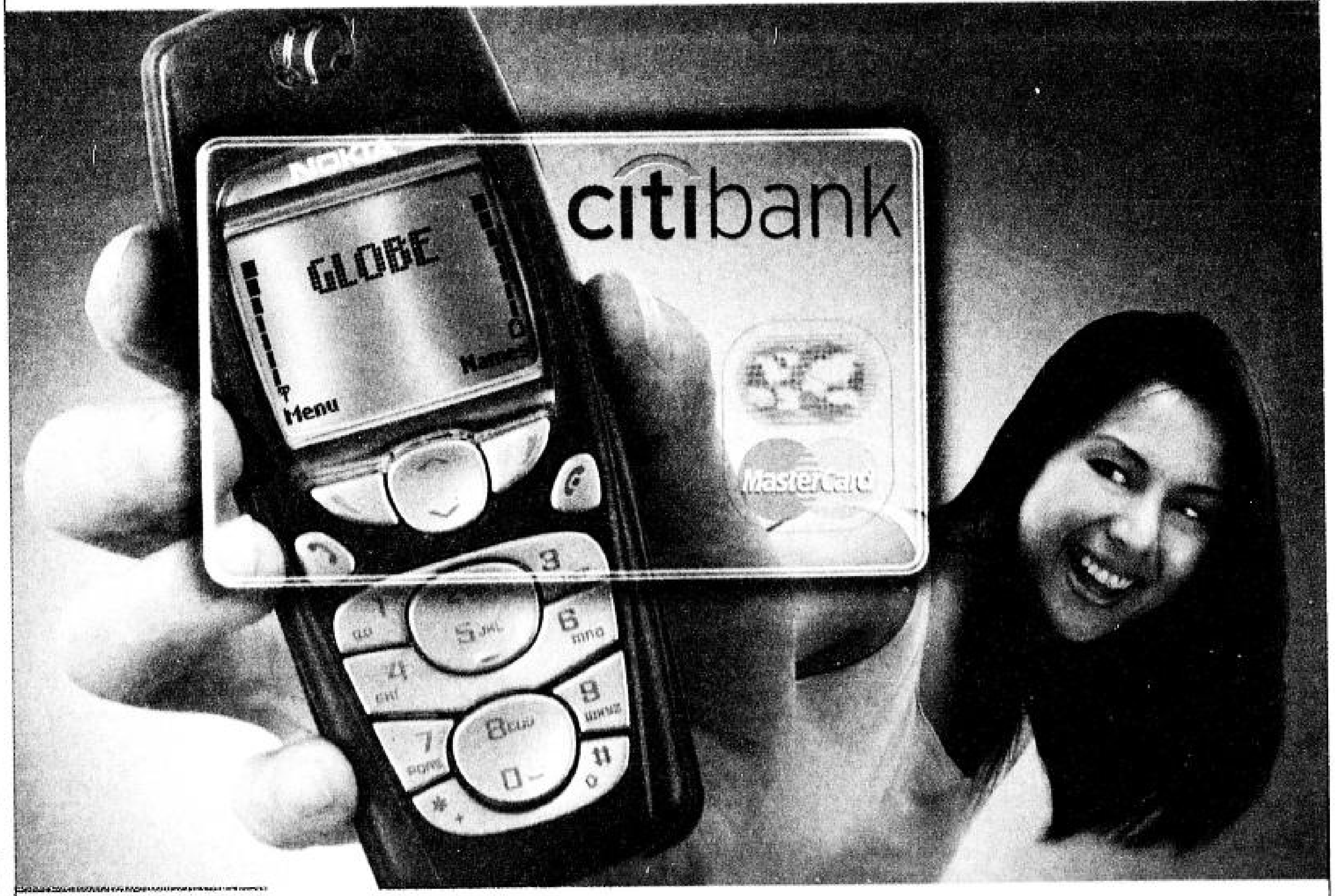

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Government troops capture strategic MILF stronghold

PROUD moment for the conquerers of Kabasalan near Pikit, North Cotabato, one of the MILF strongholds, as they are hailed by AFP Chief of Staff Dionisio Santiago (right) and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes. REUTERS

From page A1

Brigade, said 600 troops helped in the capture of Kabasalan. "All the combined elements of darkness are here in Kabasalan," Luna said, explaining that the village was used as headquarters by Salamat and also hosted members of the Pentagon gang, which is on the US State Department's list of terrorist groups.

Luna said Kabasalan was the MILF's most strategic camp in Pikit. "Even during the '70s, no government troop could get in because of its location," he said. But Luna said the military's persistence paid off at around 8 p.m. Thursday.

"After a series of firefights, two of our soldiers were wounded but we got our objective," he said.

There was no immediate report on rebel casualties. The military also did not say if it captured any rebels or alleged criminals. Reporters said Kabasalan was deserted and its defenders appeared to have fled to the countryside.

Soriano said the government offensive to clear the rest of the Buliok complex was continuing, and was expected to be complete before the end of the day.

"As of this time, the resistance is still heavy but we hope that before sundown, we could practically get this Buliok complex," Soriano said at around 2 p.m. yesterday.

Yesterday afternoon, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes arrived in Kabasalan along with regional military commanders to hoist the flag.

Before he left for the captured stronghold, Reyes told reporters that the conquest of the camp marked a victory for the government.

"The operation is going well. And we are 90 percent finished with the objective given to us by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (and) that is to capture and occupy the Buliok environment. Probably, (the) day after tomorrow, at the latest, probably tomorrow, this job will be finished," he said.

Reyes hailed the soldiers who captured Barangay Kabasalan as the real heroes of the war.

"The flag is the symbol of our democracy so we have to be proud of it. We have to see to it that the flag remains here. You (soldiers) are the real heroes," Reyes said.

But Reyes conceded that the capture of Kabasalan did not end the offensive.

He said the government wanted to conquer the Buliok complex, where MILF chair Salamat Hashim is believed to be hiding.

Soriano said soldiers were meeting "platoon-size" rebel resistance on the side of the rebel base that abuts the town of Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

"The operational directive is to destroy MILF areas wherein training on explosives and manufacture of ammunition is being done," Soriano said. The mobile munitions factories are turning out land mines, bombs, and possibly rocket-propelled grenades, he added.

Already abandoned

But Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said their fighters have actually started to abandon Kabasalan hours before the military arrived so an encounter prior to the entry of the soldiers was highly impossible.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu also made a similar statement.

"In the first place, this is not a camp. Actually the Philippine flag was being raised there everyday because of the presence of a government school. So how come the military is now claiming it is an MILF camp?" Kabalu said.

Kabalu said the decision to abandon rebel positions in Kabasalan was more of a tactical decision.

Diversionary move

The MILF attacked more villages elsewhere in Central Mindanao early yesterday to relieve pressure on the Buliok complex.

About 100 rebels killed three civilians in a dawn attack on an army base in barangay Lapayan in Kauswagan town, Lanao del Norte while a Cafgu regular was wounded, military intelligence officials said.

Richelieu Umel, the provinces' information officer, said the farmers were residents of Barangay Napo in Linamon town.

"They were going to their farm around 5:50 a.m. when the rebels caught up with them," he said. The incident occurred less than 12 hours after rebels raided a military detachment in Linamon.

MILF fighters also struck military units near the towns of Carmen, North Cotabato; Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat; and Buldon, Maguindanao, wounding two Cafgu regulars, Soriano said.

In Lambayong, scene of a fierce battle the other day, three more bodies of slain MILF rebels were recovered by the military during clearing operations in Sitio Taga, Barangay Tinumigis yesterday morning.

This brought to 44 the number of MILF casualties. Col. Agustin Dema-ala, commanding officer of the Army's 301st Infantry Brigade, told the INQUIRER that 34 other rebels had been injured in the clash. He said the nine civilian hostages used by the rebels as human shields provided the number on injured rebels.

Dema-ala said that the Moro rebels were using diversionary tactics so that the military would ease pressure on rebel sanctuaries in the Liguasan Marsh.

But Kabalu said only 40 rebels had been killed and six wounded. "We are still resisting," he told Reuters by telephone. "We moved to highly mobile guerrilla tactics."

Mounting casualties

A government tally said 176 people have been killed, including 161 guerrillas and associated armed groups, eight soldiers and militamen, and seven civilians. Some 5,000 soldiers were thrown into the campaign.

Only 43 bodies have been found, but the death toll made the hostilities the most serious flare-up of the 25-year-old MILF rebellion since 2000, when the military seized more than 40 MILF camps.

But North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pinol urged the military to continue its operation against the MILF. Pinol said that unless the military contain the criminals, "the agony of the people in Cotabato would also continue."

But Dominador Calamba, the human rights commissioner for Mindanao, said local authorities were not doing enough to attend to the needs of the displaced.

"There are things we regret. These are things we wish did not happen," Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said about the suffering of civilians. "Police action has to be taken against lawless elements if we want peace and order to really reign in our country." *Aquiles Z. Zonio and Jeffrey M. Tupas; Edwin O. Fernandez, Charlie C. Senase, Rosa-May de Guzman, Jeffrey Tupas, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Anthony S. Allada; Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau; with reports from Cynthia Balana; AFP, AP, Reuters*

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Lifestyle check ordered on all DOJ men

By Michael Lim Ubac

JUSTICE Secretary Simeon Datumanong has ordered a lifestyle check on all employees of the Department of Justice, including its four attached agencies, as part of a campaign for "good governance."

Late last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered lifestyle checks on all government officials but nothing eventually came of it. Yesterday, Datumanong ordered the heads of agencies under the DOJ to scrutinize the wealth and source of wealth of their employees.

Covered by the lifestyle check are justice undersecretaries, state prosecutors and their staff, and officials and employees of the Bureaus of Immigration and Customs, National Bureau of Investigation and Land Registration Authority.

"As I did in the Department (of Public Works and Highways), I would also like the officials and employees of the DOJ to participate in the campaign for good governance," Datumanong said.

Datumanong is optimistic the drive to force "public servants" to lead simple lives will finally takeoff, at least in his department.

He said he himself would be subjected to a lifestyle check. "I asked all the undersecretaries to check on me."

In October last year, Ms Macapagal ordered the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), which is mandated to investigate corrupt government officials, to conduct a lifestyle check on all politicians and government officials.

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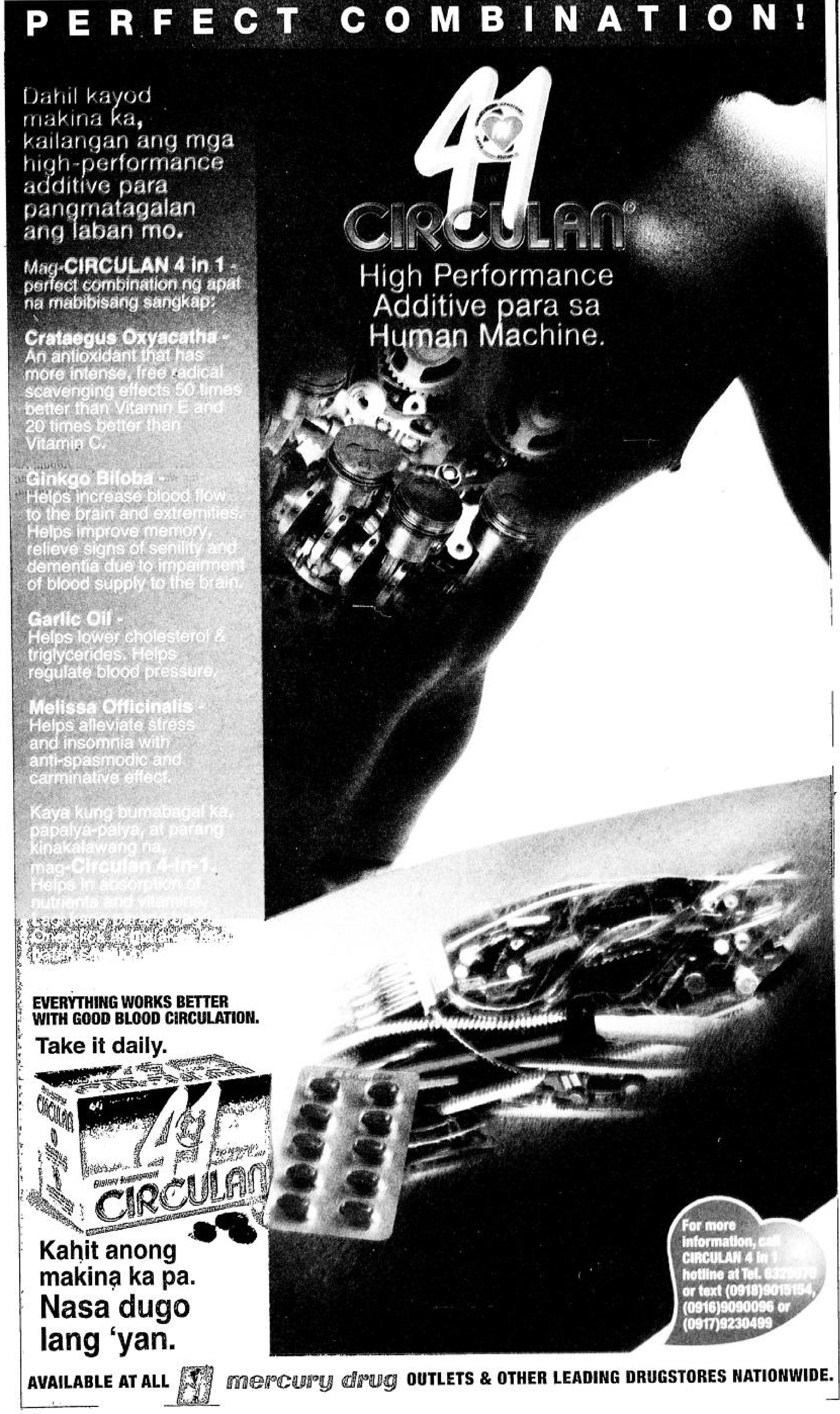

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Valentine's Day anti-war protest turns violent

By Philip C. Tubeza

A VALENTINE'S Day anti-war protest at the United States Embassy yesterday turned violent after members of a pro-US group attacked militant protesters as some police contingents merely stood by and watched.

Armed members of the pro-US Discovery Crusade of the Philippines dispersed militant groups that were marching to the embassy to protest the impending US-led war on Iraq, chasing the protesters through the alleyways of Ermita up to UN Avenue, where the militants were able to regroup.

"You are not Filipinos! We are unarmed women here and this is what you do to us!" cried a woman marcher of the Buklurang Manggagawa ng Pilipinas.

Yesterday was a red-letter day marked as a day of protest by those opposed to the US-led campaign against Iraq as it was the day when United Nations Weapons chief inspector Hans Blix was to submit a report to the Security Council on Iraq's weapons program.

About 30 mostly female members of the BMP, red-shirted and hearts painted on their faces, had marched to the embassy at about 11 a.m. when they were blocked by Discovery members at Plaza Ferguson.

The two groups had a heated exchange before violence erupted when Discovery chief Sultan Elly Pamatong arrived and egged on his followers.

Some of Discovery members were armed with batons and wore fatigues. They carried pro-American banners and inverted Philippine flags, with the red side up.

Militants claimed Discovery members were armed with guns, knives and tear gas.

To drum rolls from their band, the pro-US group pushed and then chased the militants with their truncheons

"*Kulto! Mga hayop kayo!* (Cultists! Animals!) You are not Filipinos!" cried one BMP protester.

"Communists! It's you who are not Filipinos!" shot back one Discovery member.

Minutes after dispersing the BMP marchers, the group turned on some youthful members of the partylist group Akbayan.

The heavy police presence at the embassy did not stop the violence. Unlike in previous protests, there were no anti-riot policemen to separate the BMP and Discovery groups at Plaza Ferguson.

But other anti-US protesters successfully escaped Discovery's wrath.

The militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya held a beachfront protest along Roxas Boulevard beside the embassy.

About 50 supporters of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada, members of the People's Movement Against Poverty, also showed up at the embassy to protest the administration's support for the United States.

Anti-war protesters from different points in Metro Manila converged at the historic Plaza Miranda in a "March for Peace: Resist the US War on Iraq."

The participants, consisting of students, workers, professionals and Church people, wore red shirts and blue ribbons to show their "love for peace and opposition to the US war."

"Let peace and love, not imperialist wars and plunder reign over the world," said Fr. Allan Arcebuche, convenor of the Justice Not War Coalition, which led the rally.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño, said that President Macapagal-Arroyo should maintain a neutral stand on the United States' plan to attack Iraq so she would not be further "isolated" from the people.

The Plaza Miranda protesters marched to the embassy later in the afternoon where they met up with other anti-war protesters. The groups converging at the embassy numbered an estimated 6,000 by late afternoon.

Filipino Muslims yesterday gathered at the Golden Mosque in Quiapo to protest the military offensive in Maguindanao.

Carrying placards bearing the slogan "Not Another All-Out War in Mindanao," the members of Muslim Christian People's Alliance said that it chose to hold its protest action in Quiapo because most of the Moro people living there hail from Maguindanao and "were themselves victims of the previous military offensives in the area." *With reports from Agnes E. Donato and Jerome Aning*

KICKED OUT of the country, Iraqi diplomat Husham Hussain is escorted to the boarding gate for his flight back to Baghdad.

ROGER MARGALLO

Expelled Iraqi envoy can't come back to RP

IRAQI diplomat Husham Hussain, who left the Philippines after being expelled for alleged links to the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, will not be able to enter the country again even as a tourist.

The Bureau of Immigration has included Hussain, the second secretary of the Iraqi Embassy, in its black list for his alleged terrorist links.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo said Hussain will not be admitted because he is considered a threat to national security.

Domingo said the withdrawal of Hussain's accreditation as a diplomat justified the ban on his return.

Hussain, accompanied by his wife and children, left aboard a Qatar Airways flight to Doha shortly before midnight on Thursday, airport officials said.

He was escorted to the airport by Iraqi charge d'affaires Samir A-Masih Bolus.

Hussain is the second Iraqi diplomat to be expelled from the country.

In 1991, Iraqi first secretary Jasmin A-Ani for his alleged ties to two compatriots who tried to bomb the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center in Makati.

On Wednesday Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople ordered Hussain to leave the country within 48 hours.

The Iraqi official was allegedly in contact with an alleged Abu Sayyaf leader following a bombing in Zamboanga City last October that claimed the lives of three people, including a US soldier.

Ople said an intelligence report indicated the Hussain received a phone call from an Abu Sayyaf member following the bomb attack.

The caller, who was not identified, was later arrested.

In Baghdad Thursday, an Iraqi foreign ministry spokesperson said Hussain rejected attempts by the US Embassy in Manila to lure him into defecting last week. *Blanche S. Rivera and AP*

Security tightened at entry points

AUTHORITIES yesterday said it was stepping up security at airports and other entry points after intelligence reports showed that Muslim militants were planning sympathy attacks if the United States goes to war with Iraq.

"With the imminent US and Iraq war, sympathizers of Iraq and other radical groups could take advantage of the situation and would try to stage terrorist attacks," Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said in a statement.

"We should not only focus our attention on the country's airports, but all the possible points of entry." Measures taken as part of the so-called "double red alert" include additional security personnel and more sophisticated equipment to detect explosives at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The transport department has also deployed sniffer dogs at the 18 stations that make up the capital's commuter rail network.

"Strict implementation of baggage inspection and body frisking by security personnel is continuously being undertaken to protect our commuters," Mendoza said.

Filipinos are well accustomed to having their bags checked at shopping malls and railway stations after several deadly bombings in recent years that have been blamed on Muslim militants.

Abu Sayyaf, mainly a kidnap-for-ransom gang that claims to be seeking an Islamic homeland in Mindanao, has been branded a "terrorist organization" by the United States.

Another militant Muslim group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, has been locked in fierce fighting with government troops this week.

Intelligence agencies have accused the MILF, which has an estimated 12,000 fighters on Mindanao, of links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. *Reuters*

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Teachers hit suspension of loans

By Donna S. Cueto

SCHOOL teachers have scored the suspension by the government of loans to them by private institutions, saying this has affected their ability to pay for the graduation expenses of their own children.

The Department of Education barred school teachers from getting new loans from 180 private lending institutions beginning Jan. 21 to allow for a thorough review and re-accreditation of associations and private institutions authorized to provide loans to teachers under a new automatic payroll deduction scheme. The ban ends March 15.

In a press conference, the Manila Public School Teachers Association urged Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus to fast-track the accreditation of the lending institutions so the teachers could avail of loans again to augment their salaries.

MPSTA president Benjie Valbuena said the loan suspension by the DepEd came at a time the "low-salaried teachers needed to complete tuition payments for their own children and to pay for their own kids' graduation."

He said the ban has forced many teachers to borrow money from usurious lenders.

The review and re-accreditation process, he said, was "too long a wait for teachers considering the urgency of their financial needs."

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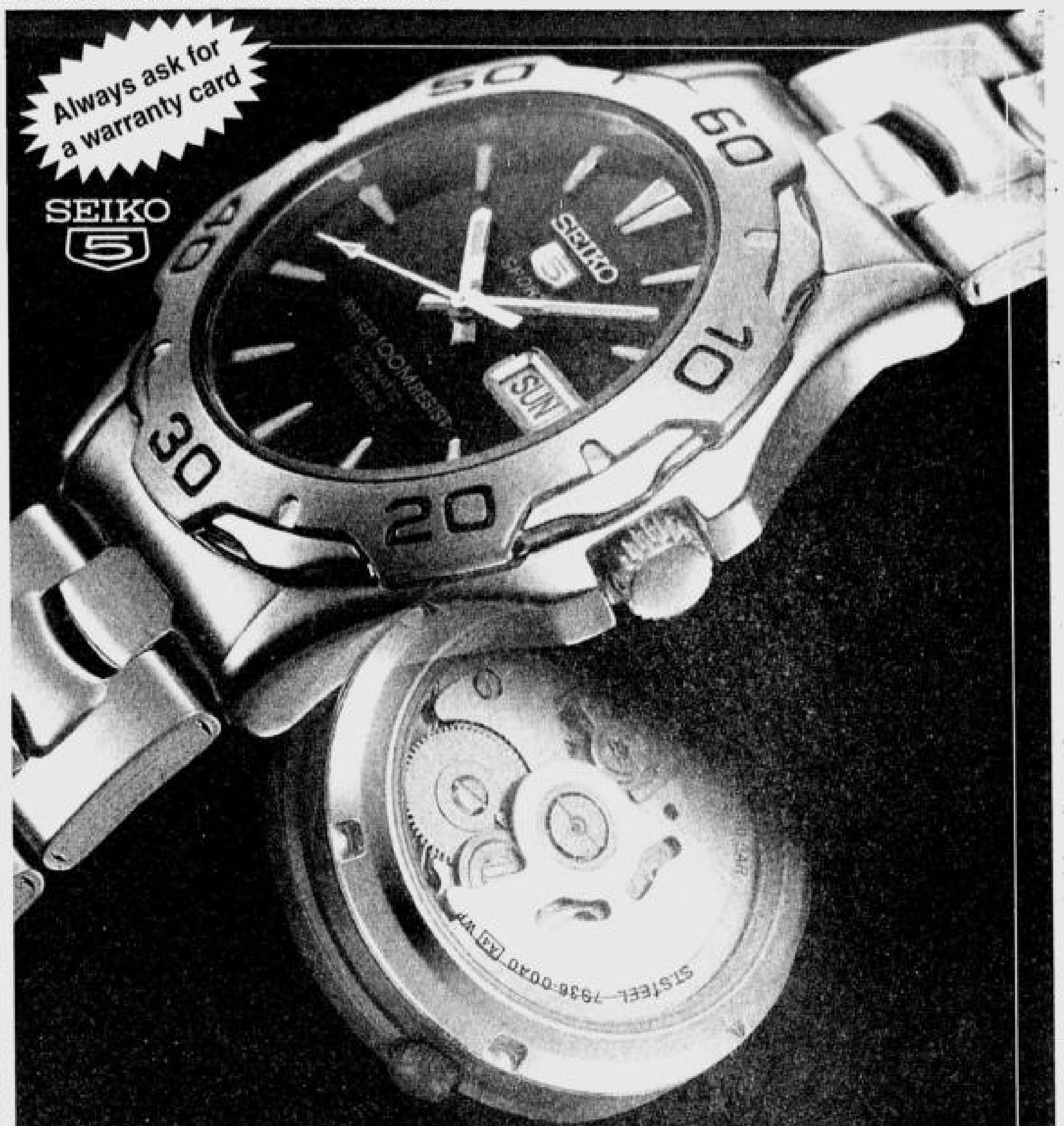

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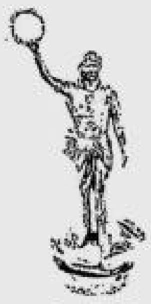
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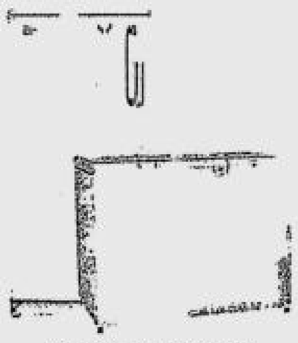
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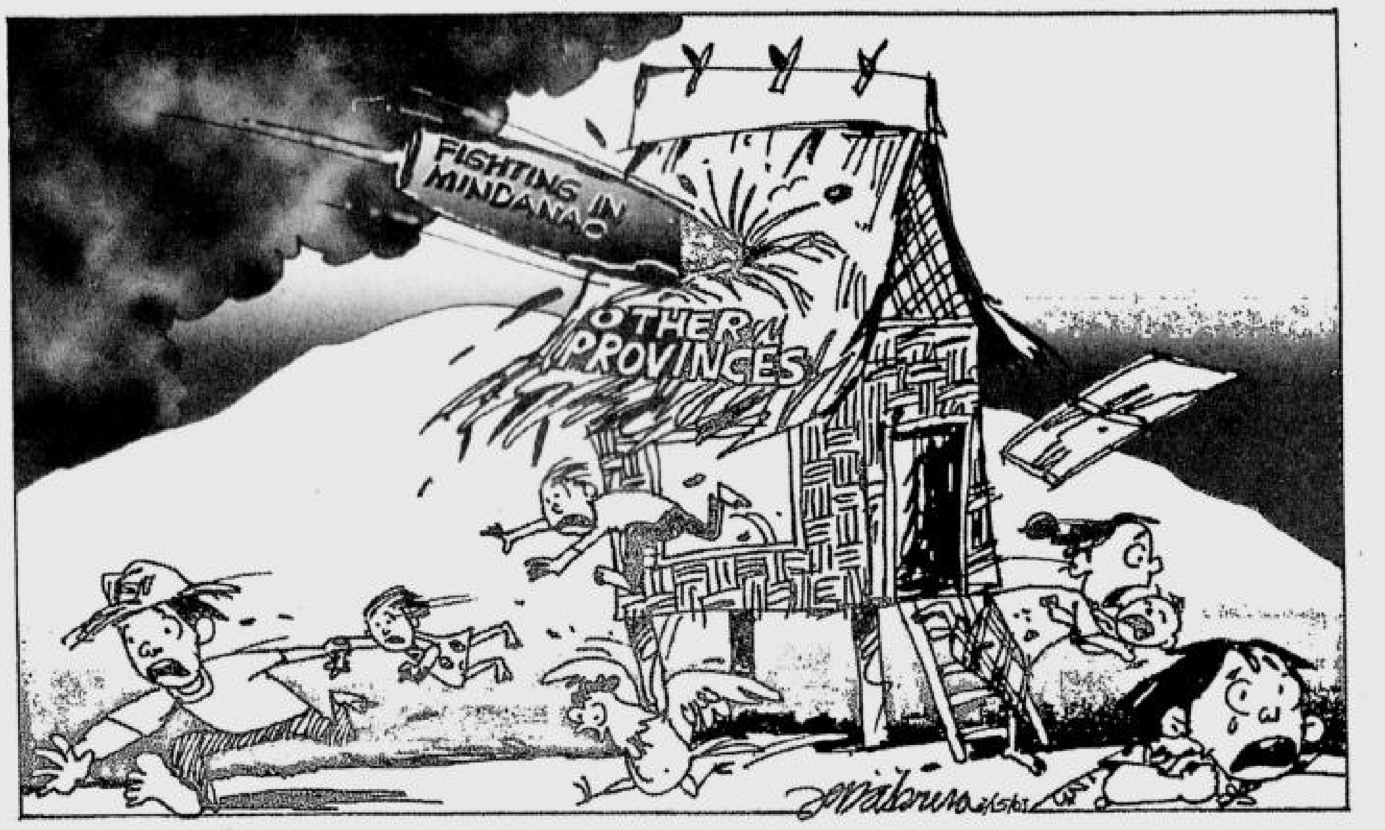

Diplomatic wrinkle

EDITORIAL

A MINOR diplomatic row erupted between the Philippines and Iraq this week when the Department of Foreign Affairs ordered the expulsion of Husham Hussein, second secretary at the Iraqi Embassy, as persona non grata, for alleged links with the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf.

The order followed the disclosure by Foreign Secretary Blas Ople that a "very detailed" report from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency had linked Hussein to the bomb attack by the Abu Sayyaf in Zamboanga City last October, killing an American serviceman and injuring another.

Ople said, "It appeared that immediately after the bombing, there was a call to the embassy by a suspected Abu Sayyaf guerrilla, intended for Hussein." No further details were disclosed by the DFA about the nature of the call. Because intelligence reports involving national security are considered "classified" information, the DFA sought refuge behind the security blanket, and the public is left guessing about the basis for expelling Hussein.

There is no question about the sovereign right of a state to expel diplomats whom security authorities consider security risks. Indeed, it is perfectly normal practice that diplomats suspected of spying on their host countries or having contacts with groups considered as threats are routinely expelled. During the Cold War, expulsions of suspected spies were pretty routine, for it is perfectly understood among diplomats that one of the important functions of an embassy or its political officers and military attachés is to gather intelligence about the host country. For that matter, embassies of friendly countries routinely spy on their hosts, and it is no secret that the US Embassy here is one of the major listening posts of the CIA in the region.

Thus, this is not the issue about the expulsion. Among the questions raised is why the expulsion took place several months after the Zamboanga bombing. The expulsion followed a telephone call to President Macapagal-Arroyo from US President George W. Bush, expressing concern over Hussein's alleged terrorist ties.

If, indeed, Bush made the call, which produced an instant response from the Philippine government, this indicates that the Philippine government is aligning itself too closely with the US policy of rushing to war with Iraq while creating provocative acts which cannot persuade Saddam Hussein to buckle down to US pressure to disarm.

Bush might derive comfort from the Philippine government's instant response, and this is understandable because the United States needs as many allies as it can muster at this time when its policy of waging an early war with Iraq is being blocked by leading European allies and the United States is facing isolation in the United Nations Security Council, where Washington is poised to force a vote on a second resolution authorizing a military strike on Iraq.

Iraq's protest against the expulsion of its diplomat was not unexpected. The expulsion of Hussein is a minor concern for Baghdad. The diplomatic row over the expulsion is peripheral and is not decisive at all in determining whether the United States will launch an immediate attack on Iraq. The report of the UN arms inspectors on Friday to the Security Council will be decisive on whether there is still a slim hope of averting war.

Ople expressed the hope that despite the expulsion, diplomatic relations with Iraq will be maintained. Whether these relations with Iraq will be maintained is of no moment to Iraq. What is irrelevant is Ople's request to Iraqi Chargé d'affaires Samir Bolus for Baghdad to delay the assignment of a new ambassador to the Philippines, saying he wanted "to welcome him in a more auspicious time."

With the US march to war becoming irreversible day by day, Ople's request could be swiftly overtaken by events. Since the Philippines is merely a bit player in the larger conflict which is being played out in the central stage of the Security Council and the Middle East, it is more prudent for us to avoid provocative acts that have no weight at all in preventing war or accelerating the momentum for a showdown. Even if Hussein has been expelled, the threat of terrorist attacks in this country from al-Qaida networks will not be diminished in case of war.

The Lower House

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

EXAMINATION of the list of representatives who voted on the resolution to impeach Comelec Commissioner Luz Tancangco will reveal the distinction between the responsible and irresponsible members of what is appropriately called the Lower House. The distinction was not surprising, considering the past and present record of that disreputable chamber.

The circumstance that the vote was called ahead of schedule, when some members who would have supported the impeachment resolution had already left the session hall, made Tancangco's exoneration more suspicious. Despite their lack of respect for the House of Representatives, many people who had read the charges against the respondent were still hoping for a different result.

That trickery aside, there are also reports that the Commission on Elections under Benjamin Abalos, eager to avoid the rift that divided it during the chairmanship of Alfredo Benipayo, secretly campaigned among the legislators for its embattled member. According to Belinda Olivares Cunanan (whose political pipeline is second to none), the Iglesia ni Cristo and other religious groups also helped Tancangco.

The susceptible legislators, for one reason or another (take your pick), mustered enough votes to defeat the impeachment move. At that, however, the margin was not that convincing, with only 69 of them outnumbering 57 of their colleagues. The vote might have been different if it had been taken the following day as scheduled, when the other members also in favor of impeachment could have participated.

On the merits, the impeachment would have prevailed if the membership of the House of Representatives had been less susceptible to improper pressure. The 200-page complaint against Tancangco deserved more than its summary dismissal by the House committee on justice, which made no effort to explain its decision. It relied only on the force of numbers to hold that the charges had no substance when it was the dismissal itself that was defective.

That dubious vote was quite in character with the earlier stance of the majority of the members of the Lower House who supported Mark Jimenez and threatened to block his arrest after the Supreme Court declared he was not entitled to bail. They arrogantly argued that they had exclusive disciplinary power over their colleagues, including those under the jurisdiction of the courts of justice.

With a few notable exceptions, the membership of the Lower House is not known for intellectual prowess or patriotic motivation, let alone fidelity to principles or even only to political persuasion. Integrity is also not its strong point, given the business interests of some of its members, as well as the vote-buying and other election irregularities that have elevated many of them to Congress.

One reason why many people are against the convening of Congress into a constituent assembly is the reported plan of its members to extend their term pending the establishment of the parliamentary form of government in lieu of the present system. They will then run for the unicameral Parliament, excluding their present colleagues in the Senate, and directly elect the Prime Minister as the head of state and government.

The Senate, for all its own imperfections, can exercise a restraining influence against the impulsiveness and erratic conduct of the House of Representatives. This has happened many times before. But with that chamber abolished, the new Parliament, this time as the lone legislative body, can do as it pleases under the leadership of the Prime Minister it can elect and replace at will.

Some say this is why Speaker Jose de Venecia is batting for Congress itself making the proposal to adopt the parliamentary system, where he expects to be elected Prime Minister. The proposal will be easily adopted with the term extension for the legislators as irresistible sweetener. Incidentally, where was the Speaker when his House advanced the voting on the Tancangco resolution, taking many of its members unaware? A leader must lead against such deceitful tactics or was he part of the plot?

The minority members are reportedly planning to take the advanced voting to the Supreme Court as a grave abuse of discretion committed by their majority colleagues. If I know the high tribunal, it will dismiss the issue as a political question involving the internal operations of a coordinate department. They should instead seek relief from the bar of public opinion, which is the court of last resort in the democratic society. Here may they find a more upright judgment than the shabby verdict of the Lower House.

* * *

NB. My good friend Benito F. Legarda Jr. faxed me a copy of his column in the Free Press against the start of the Philippines-Japan Festival in February, recalling that it was in this month in 1945 that the Japanese soldiers committed incredible atrocities during the Battle of Manila. Another esteemed columnist, Antonio C. Abaya of the Graphic, sent me a masterly analysis of President Bush's speech against Iraq and requests me to guide readers more interested in the subject to www.tapatt.org.

Bishop's gambit on GMOs

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE REGIONAL Forum on Biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) that was held two days ago in Davao, jointly sponsored by Sen. Nene Pimentel, the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), and the Biotechnology Coalition of the Philippines (BCP), was the fifth of its kind. But it was the first time that one of the speakers was a cleric—and a bishop at that.

Bishop Jesus Varela of Sorsogon, reputed to be among the more conservative members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), surprised many of his 200-odd audience—which included Bishop Guillermo Afable of Digos and Bishop Romulo Valles of Kidapawan—when he gave about as enthusiastic an imprimatur to GMOs as can be expected from a conservative prelate.

The good bishop wasn't buying the position of what he called the Anti-Global Environmentalists (AGEs), which he described as one that looks at all new technology as a new form of oppression, which considers its products as motivated solely by profit for domination, and which regards it as an undue tampering with the sacredness of nature.

Neither, however, would he support the stand of what he called the Scientistic Utilitarians (SUs), which is diametrically opposed to that of the AGEs, considering every new technogy as a sign of progress, and uphold the supremacy of science and technology over nature.

Instead, Bishop Varela chooses Christian Environmentalism, a term he coined to describe the ethical framework of analysis he adopts. The latter advocates Custody (preserving the integrity of nature), Stewardship (responsible use of material things) and Right Ordering (establishing reasonable criteria and guidelines—emphasis on reasonable) for the exercise of the first two. The guidelines include sustainable development; thorough cost-benefit analysis; and keeping science at the service of man, and not vice-versa.

Applying these to GMOs, the bishop concludes that indeed, GMOs can help provide a humane solution to the global problem of hunger and malnutrition. He points to indicators showing that GMOs can significantly improve crop yields, offer an environmentally friendly alternative to artificial pesticides, improve the nutritional properties of food, remove allergies and toxins contained in conventional foods, as well as improve quality. At the same time, says he, GMO products go through more safety and health testing, before they are released, than any of the other foods we eat.

According to BCP president Benigno D.Peczon (a Chemistry Ph.D. from Purdue University), the findings (two volumes of documents) of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life two-year study and discussion of genetic modification bolster Varela's stance. An excerpt: "We are increasingly encouraged that the advantages of genetically engineered plants and animals are greater than the risks. The risks should be carefully followed through with openness, analysis and control but with no sense of alarm. We give it a prudent yes. We cannot agree with the position of some groups that say it is against the will of God to meddle with the genetic makeup of plants and animals."

However, the bishop's stand is not universally held by his CBCP peers. Bishop Honesto Pacana of Malaybalay wrote a letter, read in the same forum, listing several objections and reservations to GMO use. One doesn't know how the two bishops in the audience reacted to the Varela position, but at least some of the audience at the forum, and certainly some sectors which Varela would categorize as AGEs, actively oppose GMOs.

Which is why Bishop Varela proposes "a top-level, open to the public, dialogue between pro-GMO and anti-GMO scientists—bona fide scientists with university credentials," which he hopes will "put the minds of the worriers at rest and settle once and for all the question of the safety of GMO foods, Bt-corn in particular."

In the meantime, though, the Philippines, after several fits and starts, joined this year the 16 other countries that grow transgenic (genetically modified) crops. Which may be a good move, because the growth of the global area planted to these crops has been nothing short of phenomenal—from 1.7 million hectares in 1996, when GMO crops were first planted, to 58.7 million hectares in 2002, a 35-fold increase in that seven-year period. The number of countries growing these crops rose from 6 in 1996, to 16 in 2002, with India joining last year. All six continents of the world grow GMO crops—although Europe lags far behind the others.

Will taking the GMO road be economically beneficial to Filipino farmers? It is too soon to find out, as the first harvest (Bt corn) will take place only in about 90 days. But Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo should take heart from the experience of South African cotton farmers. Between the adopters and the non-adopters, the latter's yield was 40 percent more than the former's; the seed requirement was 19 percent lower, the yield per kg of seed planted was 91 percent higher, the pesticide cost was 36 percent lower. True, seed costs were 68 percent higher, but the bottom line shows a gross margin that was 58 percent higher.

If we get anything like that with transgenic crops in this country, we won't be eating the other countries' dust for long.

Last two minutes again

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

VOTING on the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) was conducted by both chambers of Congress in typical Pinoy fashion—photo-finish in the last two minutes. The AMLA did not make it to the Feb. 12 deadline imposed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which was meeting in Paris to assess which countries would be sanctioned for failing to meet its requirements. But thanks to the seven-hour time difference between Manila and Paris (Manila is ahead), the congressional group that flew to Paris late last Thursday evening probably caught the FATF members as they were winding up their work and about to leave the French capital, to present the AMLA like a hot pan de sal fresh from the oven. The problem is, the AMLA shouldn't have been reduced to the last two minutes, as Congress was given sufficient time to deliberate on the amendments. Had it used its time properly instead of holding interminable debates about useless issues such as how *kawawa* Mark Jimenez is, it would have had ample time to meet the AMLA deadlines with a bit more dignity and industriousness. Such *hora-horada* work is not giving our people a good lesson in conducting affairs.

* * *

An editorial in another paper blamed the AMLA delay on Congress' penchant for interminable debates, including the House's attention to the impeachment case against Comelec Comissioner Luzviminda Tancangco. The implication is that that case was not important enough to merit attention. Far from it. The 280-page complaint against her, which was solidly documented with government records no less, would have been the second case for graft and corruption of an impeachable official to prosper. What a mighty lesson it would have been for bureaucrats. Unfortunately, the House chose to shield her. Reneging on an agreement to hold the voting on the justice committee report exonerating her last Tuesday, Feb. 4, her supporters forced the vote last Monday, Feb. 3, despite the absence of 93 members. Of course it was also pretty naive of the anti-Tancangco group to believe that they were dealing with honorable people.

* * *

That Monday's vote resulted in 69 for clearing Tancangco, while 57 voted to send the report back to the committee and investigate her; they lacked 16 votes for the needed 73 for recommitment. There are, however, some 20 absent representatives with the pro-investigation bloc, and recently some of them sent their late vote to House Secretary Roberto Nazareno. It's obvious that they can no longer influence the outcome of Monday night's voting, but obviously too, they value more what their constituents and the Filipino people think of them. These are the kind of representatives we Filipinos can be proud of, who stand firm in their convictions despite the intimidating power of the Comelec and other pressure blocs. We should salute them and I would be honored to publish their stand.

* * *

One of these 20 is Rep. Nereus Acosta of Bukidnon, who wrote Nazareno that he failed to show up last Monday because he was indisposed. But as one of the original signatories for the impeachment move versus Tancangco, Acosta, one of the few House members with a doctoral degree, stressed that he is voting against the committee report for "I believe now, as I believed then, that (she) is not fit to continue to serve as commissioner on account of the charges leveled against her by various complainants."

Another is former labor and executive secretary and now Zambales Rep. Ruben Torres who was also sick at that time. In his letter to Nazareno, Torres said he would have voted to reject the report and send it back to the committee, as he stressed that the charges against Tancangco are so serious "that if proven they would warrant her immediate removal from office via impeachment." He stressed that there is substantial ground, a prima facie case against her, but that the impeachment trial would have been a good occasion for Tancangco to establish her innocence, if indeed she is innocent. Torres ended by stressing that he is "sorry that I cannot give in to the desire of my friends both in the government and in the private sector who called me to cast my vote against impeachment."

* * *

The other day I wrote about Palawan Rep. Abraham Kahlil Mitra's request to Insurance Commissioner Eduardo T. Malinis to look into the complaint of his mother, Ms Cecilia Blanco-Mitra, widow of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, against Blue Cross Insurance Corp. Ms Mitra has stated that Blue Cross completely ignored her claim for repayment of expenses incurred in a knee surgery in the United States, despite the fact that her insurance policy was fully in force and she paid much higher premiums in return for a waiver on exclusion conditions.

Speaker Jose de Venecia has endorsed Representative Mitra's letter to Malinis for "appropriate action" and House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla is issuing a similar endorsement. The House officials' pressure on Malinis is good, as they are doing it not only for prominent complainants such as Ms Mitra and former Rep. Miguel Romero, but also for many lesser known citizens who have suffered the inaction of Blue Cross and other medical insurance firms at a time when they needed it most, during illness and confinement.

* * *

Malinis wrote this column that he has since directed Blue Cross to give its comments, and that he will look into such issues as whether or not there was indeed an agreement with Ms Cecile Mitra about the exclusion waiver that necessitated higher premium payments. "Rest assured that the commission joins Representative Mitra in his desire to extend adequate protection to the public against unethical business practices," said Malinis, who promised to keep my readers posted on developments.

Exemplary fathers

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"THE CORRESPONDENTS" last Monday tackled the issue of what folks in the "population mafia" call "male participation." That's code for a man doing his part in family planning, which can range from supporting his mate's choice and practice of contraception, to cooperating by using a condom or abstaining from sex on fertile days, to shouldering the entire burden of contraception himself, by undergoing a vasectomy.

The most interesting part of the show was Karen Davila's visit to El Nido, a small town in Palawan better known for the resort within its borders, but itself struggling against problems like dwindling resources and unemployment.

El Nido has also served as a "laboratory" for a social experiment in "male participation," a community-based campaign to get men to volunteer to undergo a non-scalpel vasectomy, a safe, simple outpatient procedure that renders a man infertile, that is, incapable of making a woman pregnant.

Infertile, take note, and not impotent. It seems that men's AND women's biggest concern is that vasectomy would weaken a man's sex drive, if not render him wholly incapable of, uhmm, performing. But as the vasectomized men's T-shirts proclaimed: "*Tigasin pa rin* (We can still get a hard-on)!" And to prove this point, Karen interviewed men who had undergone the procedure and their wives, all of whom testified that their sex life was not affected at all.

Karen also interviewed a cook in Manila who had decided that he and his wife already had the number of children they wanted and it was time for him to undergo an NSV. I'm sorry I forgot to take down the man's name, because despite his unassuming demeanor, I thought he was quite gutsy and nonchalant about his 15 minutes of fame. He even allowed the "Correspondents" crew to film him while undergoing the procedure! And, he reports, less than a day after his vas deferens (the tube that conveys sperm to the penis) was cut, he had managed to make love to his wife. Their happy faces were proof enough that the "procedure" went off without a hitch.

* * *

THE REST of the "Correspondents" episode focused on large families living in impoverished communities around the metropolis.

One mother, with 10 children ages ranging from 18 to 2, was shown chasing after a seemingly inexhaustible queue of children who needed to be bathed, fed and clothed. Still, there always seemed to be one or two running around their hovel naked. "Of course life is hard," she told "Correspondent" Abner Mercado. "It's difficult for me to see my children going hungry. I would willingly give them even the food I'm about to eat." In her eyes, I saw exhaustion too deep for words.

But the saddest story of that hour-long show was of another woman living in Pandacan, not yet 30 but already pregnant with her ninth child. "Why did it have to come to this?" asked Abner with blunt concern. "*Masarap kasi* (Because it's pleasurable)!" someone out of camera range exclaimed. The woman giggled and blushed. But later, she confided that after the birth of her fifth child, she decided to call a halt to her pregnancies and began going to the health center for regular contraceptive shots. "But when the mayor forbade it, I could no longer go for my shots and I became pregnant again." And again and again.

* * *

TO HIS credit, Mercado did interview Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who proclaims himself pro-life and thus rammed through an ordinance that forbids city health personnel from dispensing supplies, services or even information on all family planning methods except natural family planning.

(As an aside, if Atienza is so "pro-life," why does he seem to have a vendetta against all green, living organisms, such as trees as old as a century? Perhaps he believes concrete and tacky pillars are living beings.)

Atienza sought to defend his heartless policy by saying he believed in promoting "positive values." But even as he went on and on about his "values," the show aired footage of the poor family in Pandacan, of half-naked children squatting before a bowl of rice and noodles, and of their young mother with her swollen belly bending to heat water in a can.

I don't know what "values" Mayor Atienza espouses. But this I know: the men of El Nido and the cook with the shy smile are far better fathers than this "city father" could ever be. The men who had undergone a vasectomy at least cared enough about the health and welfare of their wives and children to willingly undergo a procedure which society still looks on with shock and titillation. What I most admired about the men of El Nido, in fact, was not that they had vasectomies, but that they willingly took part in advocacy sessions to tell their neighbors about the advantages of family planning, whether through a vasectomy or other methods.

* * *

I GOT a reaction to the column on the talk of Armida Siguion Reyna before the "First Wild Meeting of Excluded Families" from a friend of mine, the adoptive mother of a bright 4-year-old boy.

"She's so right," my friend said of "Tita Midz," the feisty movie producer and self-appointed spokesperson of the entertainment industry. "The Church really does have a way of making 'other' families feel so excluded."

My friend, who's single, told me that when she went to a church to have her infant son baptized, the clerk demanded that she present a marriage certificate. "What do you need a marriage certificate for?" she asked. "What if I tell you that he's my son out of wedlock? Any complaints?" The clerk eventually gave in (maybe because she's of a "certain age," I joked), but my friend seethed that such demands "put such an unfair burden on single parents." I agree.

Readers' memories of February 12, 1945

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THERE were a number of reactions to the column last Tuesday on the massacre that took place in De La Salle University's main building on Feb. 12, 1945. I would like to point out that it was not only in La Salle that these tragic massacres took place but in the Rizal Memorial Stadium and in the German Club in San Marcelino. Although I am a firm believer in forgiveness, I would like to repeat that there is absolutely no reason why the celebration of Philippine-Japan Friendship Month has to take place in February when we should be commemorating the death of the 100,000 Manila civilians. There are after all 11 other months to choose from.

Dr. Benito Legarda called to correct a mistake. It seems I "killed" off Father Cosgrave; apparently he survived and testified against the Japanese. Brother Benedict sent a book, "Our Martyrs." A reprint of "These Hallowed Halls" by Andrew Gonzalez, FSC and Alejandro T. Reyes. Many thanks. Herewith follows some reactions from readers:

Henry Grageda writes to state that "I was moved by your article in today's INQUIRER ('Let us remember February 12, 1945'), appalled as I was with the calculated murder of civilians by the Japanese near the close of the war. I am 34 years old, and to say the least, I am lucky not to have lived through that period.

"But what bothers me is that these stories were never related to us. Certainly not in school—save for a few lines in elementary history books that mentioned that the Japanese committed atrocities. Was it because even then we were already seeing Japan as an economic partner and we didn't want to offend them? I got more knowledge of the war from my parents and in-laws than school—about the evacuation of Kapampangans, the murder of boy scouts, my uncle surviving a Japanese firing squad, an aunt courted by a Japanese lieutenant, the forced labor in cotton plantations in Batangas, about the uncle-in-law who died in the Capas camp, and how my then teenage dad-in-law served as an errand boy for the Japanese and sometime informer for guerrillas. I could never understand why my grandfather—senile as he was then—went into a rage when he saw the Japanese flag I was making for United Nations Day. Because we don't hear these stories, we end up with a shallow appreciation of how we came to be as a people and a nation.

"About a dozen years ago, I was a youth delegate to an anti-nuke conference, and we had the chance to view the Hiroshima A-bomb museum. They have graphic depictions of the Japanese people who suffered from the nuclear attack. No mention what their own forces inflicted in Asia. I think that it would have been a better, balanced picture of how horrible war really is—and why peace-building should go beyond the V signs of Japanese schoolchildren. Two years later, in another conference, our delegation included an 86-year-old Huk veteran. In a touching moment, an elder Japanese, who happened to be an Imperial soldier during the war, tearfully declared his apologies, bowing down low. To them at least, there was closure.

"Three years ago, I was doing research for a story at the National Library along Kalaw. There, in a stack of moldy boxes at a dingy mezzanine, were literally hundreds of 3 x 5 index cards that were abstracts of complaints and cases against Japanese soldiers during the war. No one, save perhaps for the trickle of researchers that bothered, has made a compilation and published these if only for history's sake. The National Museum itself, in my opinion, has more an academic interest in history and culture than an inspiring one. Please continue with your stories and advice us parents how we may best tell them to our children."

Ella Carlos, daughter-in-law of Jose Carlos Jr. who was 3 years old on Feb 12, 1945, e-mailed to say: "Since I married into the Carlos family 14 years ago, I've attended a Mass at the DLSU chapel once (the 50th anniversary if I'm not mistaken) to commemorate this event. My father-in-law (now a young-looking 63-year-old grandfather of six) admits details remain rather vague with him. But his sisters Rosario (now almost 80) and two others who survived the massacre—Dionisia and Gloria (both in their past 70s), would always weep every time they step into these premises. You can really feel the pain and trauma the ordeal gave them. However, they have all moved on with their lives and are aging gracefully and beautifully, if I may say...enjoying life to the fullest.

"I am more than ever proud to have been part of this family, where the women are proven to be brave. My aunts-in-law Charing Carlos-Africa, Diony Carlos-Vergara and Glo Carlos-Vera are truly women of courage, faith and resiliency. My children were just as proud to have read your story, now being more aware of what their grandfather and grandaunts went through. I must really thank you for giving them a chance to know more of their family heritage, which I'm sure they will uphold, be proud of and serve as a legacy to their very own children. With much gratitude..."

Another message from P. M. Vasquez states: "Thanks very much for your detailed account of what transpired on Feb. 12, 1945. Since I was in grade school, I have always wondered what really happened when the Christian Brothers and several families were massacred in De La Salle. I have taken the liberty of forwarding your column to as many La Sallians I know so that Feb. 12, 1945 will never be forgotten. Thank you again for letting us know."

Dr. Consuelo Gesmundo Cupino, in Wisconsin also e-mailed her thanks. "I remember my mother telling me when I was little that the most difficult part of her life was during World War II. This is a very touching article and I asked my kids, ages 9 and 8, to read this so they'll know who suffers during wartimes. Thank you for this article."

Gcyua believes "the current generation and government are sold-out to the economic power of Japan. During the war women were hidden from the Japanese, now they're even delivering themselves. *Bumaliktad na ang mundo!* Shame, shame, shame."

When love is over

YOUNG BLOOD

Vanessa A. Doctor

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THAT one time, I fell. Hard.

For a moment I thought it could never happen. That I would give myself totally to one person whom I had vowed to love all my life. Yes, love. Such a strong, yet overused, battered, word. While others view it as a source of happiness, it gave me nothing else but grief. Love was never kind. I think it's even choosy. Judgmental. Discriminating. Countless times I recall what I've done with my lover and it brings me feelings not of lust, but of warmth. Not even close to heat. Just the rarest tingling sensation accompanied by the desire to spend the rest of my pathetic life with this one person. In sickness and in health. In death only do we part.

I have had a number of lovers. One who kissed me on the hand, one who kissed me on the cheek, one who created a fierce commune between tongues, one who tongued me all over, one who took me over and over. At times, I would be overcome by waves of pleasure. Sometimes, I would snort in disgust.

But this one was different. He wasn't even good-looking. In fact, he had the confused features of a Chinese-Spanish *mestizo*. He also was too huge for me. Beside him, I looked like the thinnest girlfriend in the world. We met as virgins. We parted as liberated souls. Chain-smoker. He only smoked blue seal. Nothing else. He supposedly came from a very influential political family. How powerful he was, I didn't stay long enough to witness.

My lover had the attitude of the cultured class. He attended a school with a reputation for being exclusively for the rich. He walked among celebrities and his friends were sons and daughters of business tycoons. He inhaled, figuratively, filtered air. But he wasn't airy. Not at all. He had the simplicity of an average person. He never made fun or sneered at the lack of others. And he loved me—a then average girl deemed unique primarily because I had enough intellectual ammo to stay at the state university.

But it's different now. So I loved him. That's how I loved him. That's why I loved him.

How it came to the point where the roads we were taking did not meet anymore, I could never explain it. But it was then that I understood. With a snap of a finger, everything could come caving in on us. And with one historic phone call, it all ended. He had left me. It was never in my plan to ask why but I did anyway. He accused me of fooling around. Untrue. I know he knows that. Though in myself I wandered, for him I chose to be faithful. An accusation that called upon death to the dying. It killed me. The only thing I managed to choke out was, "Okay... bye." I never even got the chance to scream obscenities at him to keep what little remained of my dignity and self-esteem.

I cried. Oh yes, I cried. Harder than I thought I would. I gave myself up for him. I do not deserve this.

He was of the cultured society. I was of the upper middle-class. Our paths do not meet. Our plans do not converge. Funny, I lost it all to him. He, whom I thought the most intelligent thing said was to tell me how "aphrodisiac" and "onions" were related. He who sent me messages asking me what "imperative" meant. I let it happen. I wanted it. Unfortunately, I lost. My body. My self. My soul.

I hear my lover is okay now. I see him moving on to the next life. I'm not okay. I don't see myself moving on. All I do is recall everything that had happened. And every time I look back, I feel myself turning into a pillar of salt. He used to be so concerned about me. He used to make me feel as though I was the most beautiful creature on earth. I had allowed him to make me forget myself despite the so-called strong and idyllic person I am.

He stands where I could not reach him. He has prepared to go along with the current of life. Left me drowning. Did not even look back to see if I had managed to hold on to a rock.

He got what he wanted.

All the thoughts of how I see him turn blurry. He was not the man I fell for. Or probably he was. I just failed to understand and see who he was.... and who he is.

I miss him. I miss myself. And it hurts. That was three years ago. Now I chant it like a mantra. Never allow yourself to become vulnerable. Falling in love is a sign of weakness. If you want to live, you must not love.

I have yet to see what good it could bring. Yet.

Vanessa A. Doctor, 21, is a writer.

A Valentine wish

Clarisse Ann P. Nadal

EVERY year on the day of hearts, what does one see?

Sweethearts dining out, overbooked hotels, more rose vendors on the streets, schools holding "*harana*" programs for its students, people finally mustering up enough courage to reveal their love to that special someone, restaurants with Valentine promos—everywhere you look, there is always a place for two people in love. My belief is that I don't have to wait for Valentine's Day to show my love to the people I care about. I can do that every day, and I try to. But with all the excitement building up, knowing that people very much look forward to Valentine's Day, would be enough reason to join in. It is also one day when some people who aren't usually expressive of their feelings find an excuse to be sweet for a day. I remember in my first few years in grade school, we were instructed in art class to make Valentine's Day cards for our loved ones. I had such fun cutting out hearts from red art paper and pasting away. I've never outgrown my knack for homemade stuff—be they cards or scrapbooks, for they are labors of love; although I myself now buy cards.

This Valentine's Day, I wanted to be different and celebrate the people who've always been there to encourage and support me—my family, especially my Dad and Mom. They have always been there when we needed them; they were our first teachers, confidantes, our security blanket, the people who loved and still love us unconditionally. My Dad and Mom have been on call 24 hours a day since they had us—Dad at his work (aren't all M.D.s?) and Mom, who left her nursing profession to raise us kids as good people. I can go on forever enumerating the reasons why I'm so thankful to have them as parents, but the most important fact is that they love each other, and their common goal. They knew what they wanted and worked hard to get it. As Antoine de Saint Exupery once said, "Love consists of two people gazing at each other, but in the same direction." My Mom and Dad are two different people who shared the same dream and have been able to work things out through compromise. If there was one wish I made on the Day of Hearts, it was to possess their strength, wisdom and love when I in turn have a family of my own.

Clarisse Ann P. Nadal, 24, is a corporate human resources staff member at Philamlife Makati.

LETTERS

Hands off Iraq

IN MY personal capacity as a citizen of a supposedly democratic republic, I add my voice to the global chorus of protest against the impending US war on Iraq.

The issue is not Saddam Hussein. He may be cruel and oppressive, but it is for the Iraqi people, not the United States, to decide his fate. The issue is whether the United States, ignoring the United Nations, has the moral authority to apply overwhelming force to change a regime in another sovereign state.

We are all against weapons of mass destruction, but let us not forget that the United States maintains the biggest stockpile of such weapons. We are all against terrorism, but no other nation surpasses the US record of terrorist acts. The CIA tried to assassinate Fidel Castro eight times and provided the logistics for bombing hotels and burning sugarcane fields in Cuba. The United States is the only country to use nuclear weapons against Japan in 1945. It was also the first to make extensive use of chemical warfare in the Vietnam War. Even Adolf Hitler desisted from chemical and bacteriological warfare.

As the lone superpower in the world today, the United States is bullying everybody, even its European allies. In the name of democracy, it has supported tyrants for as long as they serve its purpose. Saddam himself was once a protégé of the United States. The United States helped build his war machine as a counterforce to Iran's. The United States also armed, trained and financed the Talibans to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Only when the Talibans got out of control did the United States pursue them with hammer and tongs. After ousting the Talibans, the United States installed as president of Afghanistan a former employee of a company the Bush family partly owns. But Afghanistan is not a very valuable trophy because it is devoid of strategic resources. George W. Bush has now set his eyes on oil-rich Iraq.

If, indeed, Iraq has weapons of mass destruction and Saddam is as crazy and heartless as Bush says he is, he might unleash those weapons when pushed into a desperate situation. That will endanger the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos not only in Iraq but also in neighboring countries.

Bush might also adopt a scorched earth policy, and blast the Iraqi oil fields, one of the main sources of oil in the world. That will cause the price of oil to shoot up, making our lives more miserable and the oil business more profitable but only for some.

If the peoples of the world applaud him as our government does, Bush will be encouraged to attack the other elements of what he calls "the axis of evil." The Texas cowboy seems bent on intervening wherever US power is challenged. North Korea and Cuba may be next in line. Peace is the unlikely outcome of such adventure. It is more likely to foment religious discord and a wave of retaliatory actions.

Let it not be said that the University of the Philippines stood silent as the "Bush-fire" grows into a conflagration.

—FRANCISCO NEMENZO,
president,
University of the Philippines,
Diliman, Quezon City

Intensify gun ban

I BELIEVE that President Macapagal-Arroyo should exercise political will in the government's drive against criminality, especially in Metro Manila. She should not waver on her recent directive to disallow the carrying of firearms outside of the residence because the Philippine National Police has been gaining points in its drive.

According to newspaper reports, 24 persons, including a policeman, have already been arrested by the police for carrying assorted illegal firearms just a few days after the start of the campaign. If the anti-gun drive is gaining results, why suspend it?

Better yet, the PNP should intensify, rather than suspend or scale down, its mobile checkpoint operations against the carrying of firearms everywhere. I believe that PNP mobile checkpoints supervised by responsible police officers would be an effective deterrent against crime in the streets which is mostly committed by people with the use of firearms.

—RAMON M. GUTIERREZ,
Block 79, Lot 35, Lagro,
Novaliches, Quezon City

New Thomasite Teacher concept still under study

I APPRECIATE very much the public service you are giving the education component with the end goal of improving the educational status of those in the depressed areas like Mindanao.

At this point may I clarify the issue regarding the plan of reviving the Thomasite Teacher or English Volunteer Teacher program as reported in the newspapers which was the result of a series of meetings held between June 2000 and October 2002 with US Embassy personalities, particularly US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

In all these meetings, the following viewpoints were discussed related to the education program of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo for Mindanao, particularly the two agenda of the Edukasyon para sa Kapayapaan at Kaunlaran sa Mindanao (EDUKKMIN): mainstreaming of the Madrasah system of education and teacher training.

A detailed report of the various meetings has been submitted to the Office of the President.

The viewpoints specifically focused on the following possible assistance the United States can extend:

(a) Technical Assistance in the training of Madaris (plural for Madrasah) teachers for teaching competence in English, Science and Math, and most specifically in English. At this point, the successful experiences of the "Thomasite Teachers" or Volunteer Teachers were brought up and the plan to revive the program was mentioned and the published statement of Ambassador Ricciardone was briefly discussed .

(b) US Embassy to encourage the USAID to explore the inclusion of education concerns in its project priorities focusing on the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, particularly in upgrading teaching competence of the Madaris.

(c) In a meeting with Dr. Thomas Kral, the cultural affairs in charge, US Embassy, and Dr. Janet Wilgus, director of the Office of English Language Programs in the Department of State (US), it was initially agreed that the programs in the proposed plan to assist in the training of Filipino teachers, particularly in the ARMM, will be pursued further through more consultative dialogues with the ARMM Department of Education and the DepEd national office, respectively. The assistance will come in the form of technical people/experts in the area (English language teaching).

From the above details, I would like to stress that nothing was mentioned about the fielding of American teachers, or the specific time frame. The concept is still in the stage of "blue-printing" and consultations are still to be conducted between the sponsoring agency and the stakeholders. The final details of the plan will still have to be discussed and refined before their implementation by the educational institutions/agencies concerned both in the National and the ARMM level as lead-implementors, although President Macapagal's instruction is to focus on the ARMM with DepEd Secretary Mahid Mutilan.

—MONA DUMLAO VALISNO,
presidential assistant for
education, Office of the President,
Malacañang, Manila

Strict but senseless hospital policy

I ALMOST lost my wife Amy last Feb. 1 because of a stupid hospital policy. My wife underwent a bilateral knee replacement at FEU-NRFM. Since the operation was going to last for five to six hours, the anesthesiologists ordered three units of FWB from the laboratory. My children went down to the laboratory to donate the needed blood since they were all of the same blood type. We were surprised when they were told that there was a "first in, first out" policy, meaning that the blood available at the hospital would be used for my wife. My children's blood would just be a replacement.

My son, who incidentally is a surgeon, argued with the hospital laboratory to no avail. The lab personnel told them firmly that the policy could not be broken and the blood of my children would be used only after four matching failures of the available blood in the laboratory. And so while they were arguing, my wife continued to lose blood during the surgery until its completion without a single blood transfusion because the hospital laboratory stuck to its stupid policy. The four matchings lasted for more than two hours until my wife became pale and her blood pressure dropped to 80/60.

Blood is essential for life. My son was very much worried. My wife's hemoglobin dropped from 14 to 8. During those horrifying times, my son was afraid of an intra or post-op MI, irreversible shock, acute renal failure and metabolic acidosis. She was eventually admitted to the IC.

After all the delays, it was eventually the blood of my children which was used. The blood transfusion was finally done 11 hours after the operation started. By that time, the blood pressure of my wife was 80 palpatory. Urine output was meager. My son did an emergency cutdown and at last the first of three units of blood was available. All came from my children. The three units saved her life.

My son, Dr. Jesus C. Sison Jr., has already reported the incident to the medical director of the FEU-NRMF MC where he maintains a clinic, and also to Department of Health officials. He said: "Most of the time, a very strict policy kills the common sense in us which could lead to clear and eminent danger, if not disaster. We should learn to adjust to situations. Medicine was never one plus one equals two. It is way beyond these measurements." The successful operation was done by a team led by orthopedic surgeon Dr. Antonio B. Sison and anesthesiologist Dr. Jose Acosta.

—JESS C. SISON,
former press secretary
and MTRCB chair,
full_circle_communications@
yahoo.com

An appeal to show-biz pals

I JUST wish to make an appeal to my friends in show business to follow the government's effort to collect the value-added tax on the incomes of entertainers, and just to think of it as an "act of selfless love."

The Bible says, "If much is given to you, then much is expected of you." The VAT is not too much of an imposition really. Let us share and give freely and wholeheartedly, and we will be blessed abundantly. Everything we give will be given back to us a thousand-fold.

—JOJO P. ALEJAR,
SW 508 HOR
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Office 2000 Package(Win2000, MSWord, MSExcel, MSPowerPoint) P6,400/48hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar20
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar20
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Apr05
Program Logic Formulation P1,700/24hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar06
	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar10-Mar20
	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar24-Apr03
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar06
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar31-Apr10
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar06
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar31-Apr10
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Feb28-Mar14
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Mar21-Apr04
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar15
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-Apr05
Enhanced Web Page Designing in HTML & Java Script P6,500/36hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar13
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar13
Macromedia Flash MX P4,000/24hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb17-Feb27
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
Macromedia Flash MX Action Script (Adv. Flash) P4,000/24hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar03-Mar13
Introduction to MS Transact SQL P3,000/30hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Feb17-Mar04
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar25
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb17-Mar04
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar25
Visual Basic.Net Fundamentals P7,000/45hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr02
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-Apr26
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Mar16-Apr20
Microsoft Access P3,900/30hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar17-Apr03
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar15
Structured Programming in C & C++ P3,000/30hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar24-Apr11
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar27
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar24-Apr11
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar27
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-Apr19
JAVA Programming Fundamentals (Module 1) P6,000/30hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar27
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Apr07-Apr30
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Mar27
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Apr07-Apr30
	8.00-3.00	Sat	Mar15-Apr26
Developing Applications in JAVA Programming (Module 2) P6,000/30hrs	3.30-8.30	Sat	Mar15-Apr26
Network Technology P8,000/45hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar10-Apr02
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr02
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Apr05
Administering Windows 2000 Networks P8,000/48hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar10-Apr03
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr03
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr03
SQL Server 2000 Administration P7,000.00/45hrs	9.00-4.00	Sat	Mar08-Apr26
Network Infrastructure P7,000/45hrs	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar10-Apr26
System Administration – Linux (Module 1) P4,500/30hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar13
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Mar12-Apr01
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar13
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb15-Mar15
Network Administration in LINUX (Module 2) P5,000/30hrs	9.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
	1.30-4.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
Administering LINUX Intranet Caching Servers (SQUID) P1,300/8hrs	1.30-4.30	Fri	Feb14-Feb21
	1.30-4.30	Fri	Mar14-Mar21
Active Directory Services Administration P8,000/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar17-Apr03

ELECTRONICS

Basic Electronics P3,400/36hrs	8.00-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar10
	8.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar17-Mar31
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar10
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	Mar17-Mar31
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Feb28-Mar28
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Mar02-Mar30
Microcomputer Hardware Fundamentals P3,700/36hrs	8.00-12.00	M-Th	Mar17-Mar31
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar10
	1.00-5.00	M-Th	Mar17-Mar31
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar12
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar17-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Feb28-Mar28
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P3,900/35hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Feb28-Mar28
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
Advanced Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P3,900/35hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Feb24-Mar11
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar17-Apr01
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Feb28-Mar28
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
Television and Monitor Servicing P3,400/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar11
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr01
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
Practical Cellular Phone Servicing P4,800/27hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr01
Applied Telephony P3,400/36hrs	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar29
Home Video Editing P3,400/30hrs	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Mar17-Mar20
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar24-Mar27
	8.30-12.00	Sat	Mar08-Mar29
Electronic Project Processing & Fabrication P3,700/36hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar11

AUTOMOTIVE/REF & AIRCON

Basic Driving Course P5,000/15hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb10-onwards
	1.00-5.00	M-F	Feb10-onwards
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar14-onwards
Auto Engine Electrical P3,000/42hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar13
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar13
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-Apr26
Auto Body Electrical P3,600/48hrs	2.00-5.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar17
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar17
Gas Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May10
Diesel Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	2.00-6.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May10
Basic Car Maintenance P2,800/30hrs	2.00-5.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar07
	2.00-5.00	M-F	Mar10-Mar21
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar15
Automatic Transmission Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May10
Electronic Fuel Injection Servicing P4,200/48hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar17
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar17
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May10
Underchassis Mechanic P3,900/60hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
Refrigeration & Aircon Servicing P4,900/60hrs	9.00-12.00	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar21
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May10

ELECTRICAL

Industrial Electrician P4,500/60hrs	8.30-12.00	MWThF	Mar03-Apr04
	1.30-5.00	MWThF	Mar03-Apr04
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr02
	8.00-5.30	Sat	Mar29-May24
	8.00-5.30	Sun	Mar30-May25
Building Wiring Installation and Maintenance P4,500/60hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr02
	1.30-5.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr02
	5.30-9.00	MThF	Mar03-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Apr12-June07
Advanced Industrial Motor Controls P4,500/60hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar03-Apr07
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Apr12-Jun07
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Apr13-Jun08
Electrical Control Wiring Installation and Troubleshooting P4,500/48hrs	5.30-8.30	M-Th	Mar03-Mar27
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar15-Apr26
Motor & Transformer Rewinding P4,500/60hrs	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr07
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Apr12-Jun07
AutoCAD 2000i P4,800/72hrs	8.30-12.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr08
	5.30-9.00	M-Th	Mar03-Apr08
	8.00-5.00	Fri	Mar21-May23
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar22-May24
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Mar23-May25
3D StudioViz R4 P4,000/48hrs	8.00-5.00	Sat	Apr12-May24
	8.00-5.00	Sun	Apr13-May25

MECHANICAL

Lathe Machine Operator P5,000/40hrs	5.00-9.00	MThF	Feb24-Mar11
	5.00-9.00	MThF	Mar17-Apr01
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar22
Milling Machine Operator P5,000/40hrs	5.00-9.00	MThF	Feb24-Mar11
	5.00-9.00	MThF	Mar17-Apr01
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar22
Basic CAD/CAM (Mastercam) P3,500/40hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar12
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar22
Gas Welding P3,000/40hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar12
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr02
	8.00-5.00	Sat	Feb22-Mar22

INSTRUMENTATION

Pneumatic Ind'l. Controls P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar14
Electro-Pneumatics P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr04
	8.00-4.00	Sat	Mar01-Apr05
Basic PLC P4,200/42hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar14
	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr04
	8.00-4.00	Sat	Mar01-Apr05
	1.00-8.00	Sat	Mar08-Apr12
Calibration for Process Instrumentation P4,200/30hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Mar14
	9.00-4.00	Sat	Mar01-Apr05
Industrial Process Controls P4,200/30hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Apr04
SCADA for Plant Operators P3,600/20hrs	1.00-6.00	M-F	Mar03-Mar07
	1.00-6.00	M-F	Mar17-Mar21
Process Automation Course P7,600/72hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-Apr04
Machine Automation Course P10,800/120hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Feb24-May09

HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

Enhancing Communication Skills P2,400/21hrs	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar01-Mar15
Creating Preventive Maintenance Systems P2,400/21hrs	8.00-5.00	Sat	Mar16-Mar29
Creating and Evaluating Career Portfolio P2,400/21hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar03-Mar11
Mastering Feasibility Studies P2,400/21hrs	5.30-8.30	M-F	Mar17-Mar26

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Getting rid of Saddam

COMMENTARY

Francisco S. Tatad

CAN a US invasion of Iraq still be stopped? The last question about its legality or morality has not been asked. But the United States has left no doubt it will act unilaterally if the UN Security Council fails to act. Over 100,000 US troops are now within striking distance of Iraq.

The United States has placed upon Iraq the burden to disarm, not on the UN inspectors to find the weapons Iraq has concealed. If no such weapons, therefore, were found, it would not be because they did not exist, but because Iraq has concealed them from the inspectors. It's a no-win situation for Iraq.

While Secretary of State Colin Powell's "evidence" against Saddam Hussein failed to sway Germany and France—even the Vatican found it "unconvincing and vague"—he succeeded in showing the Security Council that the United States is convinced of its own case, and determined to punish Saddam. Saddam must either submit or perish.

If Saddam resists, the United States could bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age. If, on the other hand, he submits, then President Bush could call off the attack. If Saddam has merely succeeded in hiding chemical, biological and nuclear weapons from the inspectors, and he chooses to use them now, Hiroshima could be repeated all over again. Iraq could get nuked in the process.

The war could take a different course, though, if North Korea and Iran—the two other countries named by Bush in his "Axis of Evil" speech—were to pull their own surprises. In Korea, Japan could get involved. The United States could lose its focus. But assuming no distractions, Saddam could go as predicted.

Saddam knows better than most that during a desert storm one ducks for cover rather than argue with the whirling gusts of wind and sand. The same is true when one is caught on the path of an elephant stampede. This rule has since migrated into politics.

In 1962, the world teetered on the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis. Invoking the Monroe Doctrine, the United States blockaded Cuba to stop the transport of Soviet missiles. Arguing that the United States had missiles in the Carribean, Turkey and Western Europe pointed at Moscow, Khrushchev vowed to run the blockade.

War looked imminent as ultimatums were exchanged between Kennedy and Khrushchev. But just when all hope for peace seemed lost, Khrushchev recalled his ships. Americans and their allies hailed this as Kennedy's triumph. But many continue to say, with Lord Russell, that it was Khrushchev who had saved the peace.

Iraq is not Cuba, but Saddam could do a Khrushchev. That would entail extreme personal sacrifice. But it may be a small price to pay for world peace. Still, supposing Saddam withdrew, what next? Were the United States and Europe to grant him immunity, would he be beyond the reach of others?

Given the emerging regime of "universal jurisdiction," and with Milosevic and Pinochet now on the dock, is there any crack on the rock where Saddam could insert himself without being dragged to the International Criminal Court later on for aggression, other war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide?

With such dark prospects hanging over his head, Saddam will just have to fight back.

Eleazar, the Zealot, found himself in such a fix after the Roman army overran Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Badly outnumbered, Eleazar's band held out at Masada, the rock-fortress on the edge of the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea valley, which Herod had built. The siege took years. When finally the Romans captured the fortress, they found all its defenders dead, a case of mass suicide. Not a single defender lived to honor the Romans.

No one sees this happening in Iraq. But Saddam might settle for its moral equivalent. While Iraq lies in blood, he could destroy all the oil wells and some known icons of ancient Mesopotamia, just to deny the United States the spoils of conquest and multiply the cost of rebuilding Iraq. That would be destruction enough.

But without UN authorization, a US-led war on Iraq will destroy the UN before it destroys Saddam or Iraq. This would be the biggest collateral damage of all. Terrorism will not disappear from the face of the earth. Unilateralism will simply replace multilateral cooperation and dialogue, justice for the weak will vanish under the rule of the strong, and world-class terrorists could begin to look benign beside those who would make our lives safe from terrorists.

We need not take this road.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US not pressing sanctions against N. Korea for now

WASHINGTON—The United States is offering North Korea a clear chance to improve ties with the rest of the world and is not seeking UN sanctions against it, the administration's top Asia expert said on Thursday.

The comments in Congress by Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly seemed aimed at accommodating China, which has viewed the prospect of sanctions with alarm, and at calming tensions with the North as Washington gets nearer to possible war with Iraq.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said separately he believed a diplomatic solution was possible in North Korea despite US insistence on a regional approach rather than the bilateral approach demanded by Pyongyang.

And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld raised the possibility of shifting US forces away from the fortified border between North and South Korea and removing some of the 37,000 US troops stationed in the south.

Appearing before a House of Representatives International Relations subcommittee, Kelly said President George W. Bush was "holding out an unmistakable opportunity" for North Korea to transform its ties with former enemies.

Bush remained committed to offering the North a "bold approach" that could bring benefits if Pyongyang scuttled its nuclear programs, Kelly said. But all options remained open if the situation worsened, he said.

The governing board of the UN's nuclear watchdog agency—the International Atomic Energy Agency—on Wednesday declared North Korea in breach of atomic safeguards and sent the issue to the UN's highest body, the Security Council.

Asked what the UN should do, Kelly said: "I don't anticipate that the Security Council is going to vote any sanctions, at least at this stage in the problem."

Kelly reiterated that Washington considered the nuclear row with Pyongyang an international problem so any talks had to occur in a multilateral context, which the council offers.

Pyongyang has repeatedly called for direct talks with the United States and last month said it would view economic sanctions as "a declaration of war" by the Council.

China, the North's closest ally, has also opposed UN sanctions, although it joined with Washington in sending the crisis to the Security Council.

Kelly faced renewed criticism from lawmakers who faulted the administration for rejecting direct bilateral talks with the North and giving priority to eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction over those of North Korea.

Kelly said the United States was urging China and Russia to use their economic and diplomatic ties to pressure the North into abandoning its nuclear ambitions.

Lawmakers were particularly incensed at what they felt was a lack of action by China, the North's major food and fuel supplier. *AP*

Seoul's Kim says sorry for scandal amid crisis

SEOUL—South Korea's president apologised on Friday for a scandal involving cash payments to North Korea but urged politicians to drop the case because of tensions over the nuclear standoff with Pyongyang and possible war with Iraq.

The beleaguered 78-year-old Kim Dae-jung, 11 days from leaving office, defended his policy of seeking reconciliation with communist North Korea—an approach already strained by the crisis between Pyongyang and Washington over the North's nuclear brinkmanship.

"The issue of Hyundai Merchant Marine sending money to North Korea has caused great controversy and concern among the people," Kim said in a televised address. "I feel very sorry about this."

His top North Korea adviser, Lim Dong-won, said Hyundai had briefed him at the time about $500 million in payments to the North in exchange for exclusive rights to seven business plans.

Kim said he took responsibility for the scandal but urged politicians to let the matter rest.

"Now is a time of rising tensions on the Korean peninsula and the serious North Korean nuclear issue, as well as an impending Iraq war, which will have a huge impact on our country," said Kim.

The comments in Congress by Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly seemed aimed at accommodating China, which has viewed the prospect of sanctions with alarm, as well as calming tensions with the North.

The impact of Kim's comments on financial markets was restrained, although Hyundai Merchant Marine's stock rose eight percent in response to the half-hour briefing. *Reuters*

UK police nab Venezuelan with grenade

LONDON—Police arrested a Venezuelan man carrying a live hand grenade at Britain's Gatwick airport on Thursday and beefed up security measures amid intelligence-led fears that London and Washington could be targeted by al-Qaida.

In the United States, anti-aircraft missiles protected the Pentagon—a target in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks—and F-16 fighters were placed on 24-hour alert near Washington.

Police circled New York's Grand Central Station, stopping and searching vans while extra police patrolled streets.

In London, British police said they had arrested the 37-year-old Venezuelan man under anti-terror laws. He was being held overnight in a city center police station.

Airport authorities suspended flights from Gatwick's North terminal for over four hours and were trying to clear a backlog of departures after reopening it at 7:45 p.m.

British Airways canceled their Friday departure to the Venezuelan capital Caracas, the starting point for the flight carrying the man with the grenade. His flight also stopped in Colombia and Barbados and it was unclear where he boarded it.

Despite the scare, an Interior Ministry spokesperson said: "It is not uncommon for people in airports to be discovered with some form of weaponry. It doesn't mean they are all al-Qaida terrorists."

In the largest security operation in the history of Britain's Metropolitan police force, troops in tanks and armed police patrolled London's Heathrow airport for a third day.

Police arrested two men near Heathrow on Thursday but detectives stressed the arrests were precautionary and did not appear to be significant.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, US President George W. Bush's closest ally in the war on terror, said it was vital "to do absolutely everything we can to root these terrorists out." *Reuters*

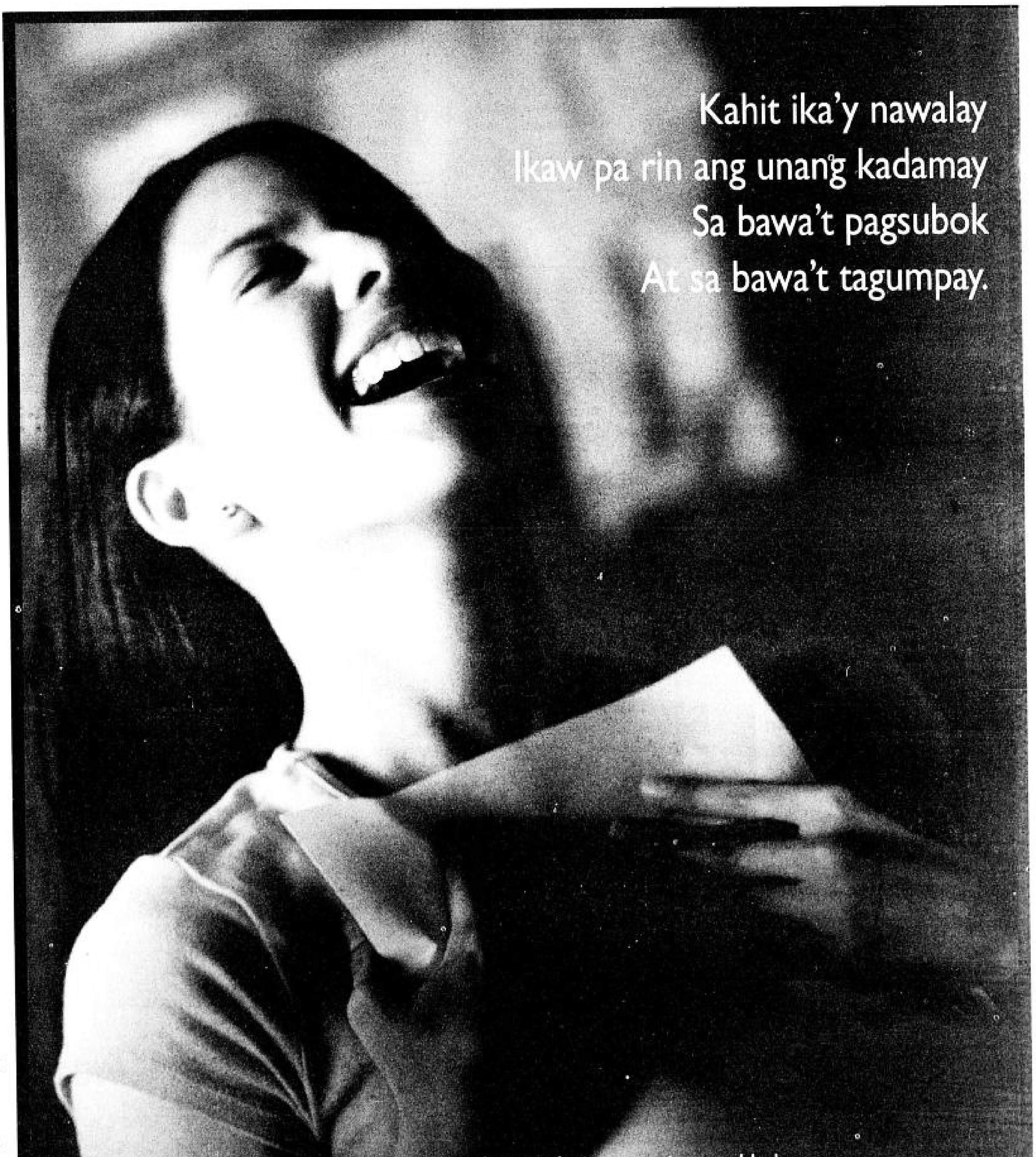
WORLDBRIEFS

23 dead in Bolivia protests

LA PAZ—At least 23 people were killed and some 100 wounded in two days of protests against economic belt-tightening measures proposed by President Gonzalez Sanchez de Lozada. Riots rocked the capital Thursday as the political opposition and trade unions called on the president to resign, following a day of pitched battle between troops and police. Teachers, farmers, and union workers all protested against the tough budget measures the president had planned to introduce in a bid to cut the nation's deficit. Sanchez de Lozada later dispatched two top cabinet ministers to Washington for talks with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund seeking assistance. In a national broadcast late Thursday, Sanchez de Lozada said he would listen with "interest and humility" to what Bolivians had to say, but said that he would not resign. *AFP*

US soldier gets 30 years

SEOUL—A US military tribunal in South Korea has jailed an American soldier for 30 years for charges including sodomy and assault against a South Korean soldier, the US army said in a statement. The ruling comes at a delicate time for Washington after South Korea was rocked by large-scale anti-American street protests and as it seeks Seoul's help in resolving a deepening crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The Seoul-based 8th US Army said a court martial found US Sergeant Leng Sok guilty of five charges in a sexual attack in March 2002 on a South Korean soldier serving with the US Army during a training course. Sok, who had been assigned to Fort Lewis in Washington state, was convicted late on Thursday of assault, indecent acts, sodomy, submission of a false official statement and conspiracy, the 8th Army said in a statement. *Reuters*



Para kay Jenny Santos, ang ate niyang nasa London ang laging una niyang takbuhan.
Kasi sa ilang minuto lang, nakapagpapadala na ito ng tuition sa tulong ng Western Union.

Parang si Ate mismo ang nag-abot kaya panatag ang loob nilang dalawa. At ngayong nagtapos na si Jenny, si Ate rin ang unang makakatanggap ng magandang balita!

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US refuses to rule out use of nukes on Iraq

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Thursday refused to rule out the US use of nuclear weapons in a possible war with Iraq, while a leading senator told him such a move would trigger "a near-total breakdown" in American relations with the rest of the world.

"Our policy historically has been generally that we will not foreclose the possible use of nuclear weapons if attacked," Rumsfeld said at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

But he added: "We have every confidence that in the event force is to be used in Iraq that we can do what needs to be done using conventional capabilities."

The United States is assembling a large military force in the Gulf region for a possible war with Iraq. President George W. Bush has said the United States will lead a coalition to disarm Iraq if the Iraqis fail to comply with UN resolutions requiring them to give up any weapons of mass destruction. Iraq denies possessing such arms.

Rumsfeld's comments came during pointed questioning by Sen. Edward Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, who expressed alarm that the Bush administration may be lowering the threshold for possible use of nuclear weapons.

"As you well understand, the nuclear weapon is not just another weapon in an arsenal. And until now we've always kept them in a class of their own for good reason because of the enormous destructive power and our profound commitment to do all we can to see that they are never used again," Kennedy said.

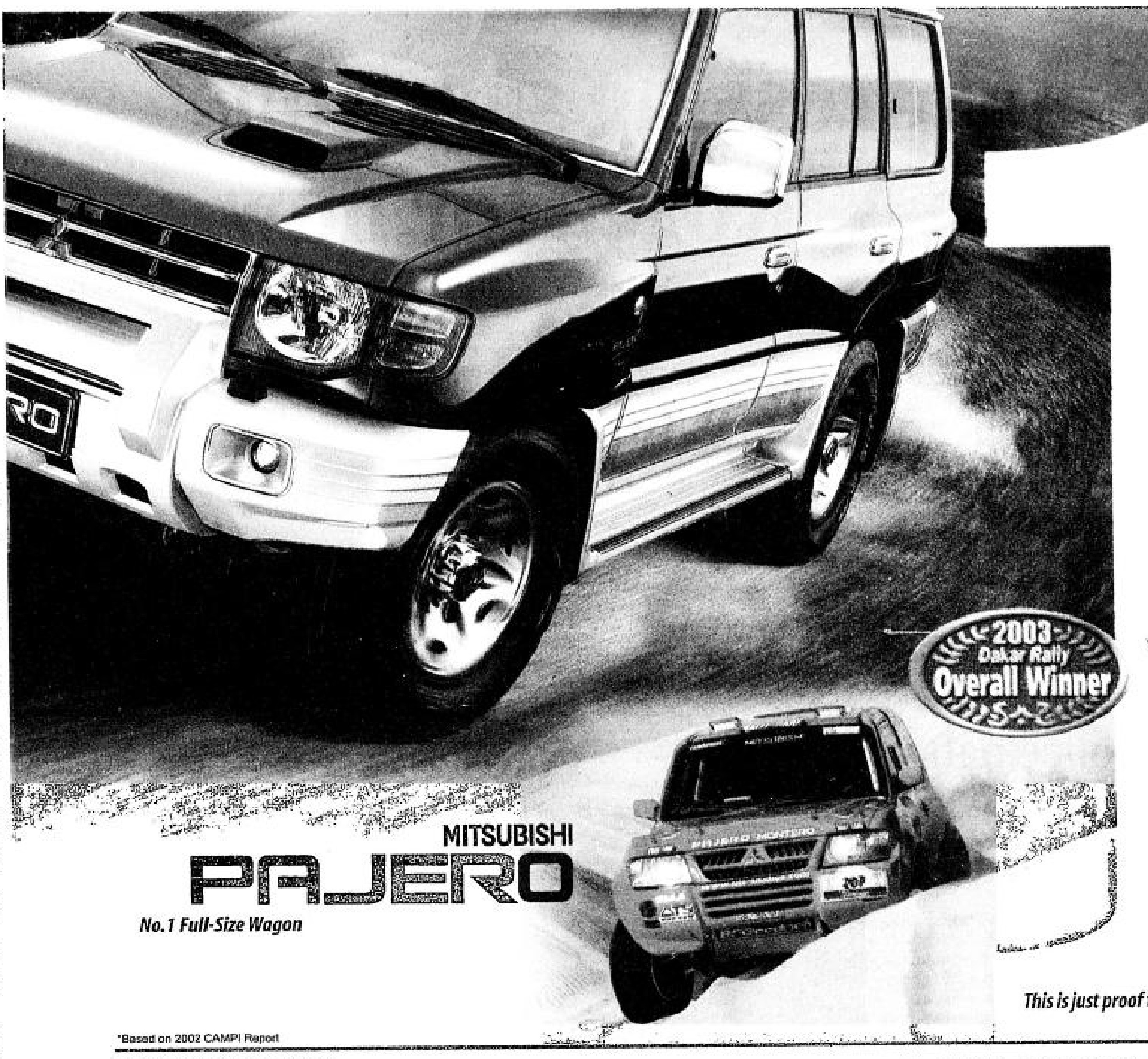
Kennedy then asked whether the United States was "seriously considering using any nuclear weapons against Iraq?"

"The only person in the United States who has the power to use weapons of that nature is the president of the United States," Rumsfeld responded.

Kennedy pressed Rumsfeld about a Jan. 25 Los Angeles Times article citing a report by defense analyst William Arkin saying US military planners are examining potential nuclear targets in Iraq and mulling options, including so-called bunker-buster nuclear weapons against deeply buried military targets.

The Times said the planners were focusing on the use of tactical nuclear arms in retaliation for a strike by the Iraqis with chemical or biological weapons, or to preempt one.

"I'm concerned that the use of nuclear weapons in Iraq in the absence of an imminent, overwhelming threat to our national security would bring a near-total breakdown in our relations between the United States and the rest of the world, particularly with regard to the Arab world," Kennedy said. *Reuters*



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Anti-war feeling to boost worldwide protests

LONDON—Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to march through London, Tokyo, New York and dozens of cities around the globe this weekend as opponents to a possible US-led war in Iraq step up their anti-war efforts.

In Britain, several lawmakers from Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labor Party will be among the protesters, possibly worrying the British leader.

With opposition to military action remaining stubbornly high in Britain, Blair's ready enlistment in US President George W. Bush's "coalition of the willing" against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has proved the biggest challenge of his premiership.

While Blair insists Saddam must be disarmed by force if he will not do it willingly, the prospect of war has split his party.

Among the protesters gathering in London's Hyde Park Saturday will be senior Labor figure—including former Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam—and large delegations from the trade unions that form the party's core support.

Organizers say millions of people are expected to protest Saturday in hundreds of cities around the world, from Vancouver and Mexico City to Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Up to 100,000 people are expected in New York, where Archbishop Desmond Tutu and actors Susan Sarandon and Danny Glover will address a Manhattan rally. Weekend demonstrations are planned across Australia, whose government has joined Britain and the United States in committing troops to a possible war.

German anti-war groups say 80,000 will gather in Berlin. The French and German governments have led European opposition to a military strike.

Leaders of railway, firefighters and general workers' unions will address the London event, alongside US civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, playwright Harold Pinter, activist Bianca Jagger and the leader of Britain's opposition Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy.

In several European cities Thursday, demonstrators protested US policies and possible war with Iraq:

- In Vienna, Greenpeace activists covered parts of the Austrian capital's famous Burgtheater with an anti-war banner showing a portrait of US President George W. Bush with his eyes covered by the signs of the Esso oil company. The picture, which was projected onto a large white fabric attached to the historic building, also included the words: "No war for oil!" and "Stop Esso, stop Bush."
- In several German cities, more than 10,000 people took part in demonstrations, underlining support here for Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's stance against military intervention. In Dresden, survivors marked the 58th anniversary of the Allied bombing that devastated the city at the end of World War II: "Help to prevent new suffering, new destruction and new death."

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ROUNDUP

No FMD

SAN FERNANDO CITY—There is no foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in any part of La Union. This was declared by Renato de Leon, provincial veterinarian, in reaction to earlier reports that hogs from Bangar town were infected with FMD. De Leon said that on Feb. 5, the National FMD Control Task Force in the Ilocos, which conducts FMD surveillance, found several hogs with positive signs of FMD at the abattoir in Bangued, Abra. The hogs were traced to a supplier from Bangar. But the task force also learned that before heading for Bangued, the shipper stopped at Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, to bathe the animals. De Leon said a recent inspection of the pig farm and other farms in Bangar by personnel of the provincial veterinarian's office yielded negative signs of FMD cases. *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Rape

BAGUIO CITY—The National Bureau of Investigation on Thursday arrested a 23-year-old man for raping his 14-year-old niece in Tuba, Benguet. Lawyer Rickson Chiong, NBI Cordillera director, said the suspect is a brother of the victim's mother. Chiong said the suspect started sexually abusing his niece in his house in Tuba in November last year. The last abuse happened on Jan. 31 this year, NBI reports said. *Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Homecoming

ALL alumni and retirees of the Sto. Rosario Elementary School (SRES) in Angeles City are invited to a Grand Motorcade and Alumni and Retirees/Resignees Homecoming on Feb. 16. Motorcade assembly is at the SRES campus on Jesus Street (facing Sto. Entierro) at 1 p.m., followed by the Alumni and Retirees Homecoming at the school quadrangle. The SRES, the first Thomasite school in the city, marked its centennial in September. For information, contact Mrs Rosalinda Cordero, chair of the SRES Centennial Committee at 0918-922-0516 or call the school phones at (045) 322-4496 and (045) 887-1395.

Fernandez, 93

Leopoldo Fernandez of Kalibo, Aklan died on Feb. 12 at age 93. He is survived by wife Tarciana Trance, children Gil and Rosie, Liwayway and Fred Mendoza, Ted Leo and Wilma, Lorna Jean and Camilo Orlina, Alexis and Nida, Ida and Arman Caalim, Vic and Edwin and Gemma, and the grandchildren. The body lies at Funeraria Oro in Sampaloc, Manila. Burial is on Feb. 22 at the Manila North Cemetery.

New commander

CATBALOGAN, Samar—Brig. General Glenn Raboza is the new commander of the 8th Infantry Division based in Camp Lukban, Barangay Maulong here. He took over the command from Major Gen. Romeo Dominguez who was promoted chief of the Northern Luzon Command based in Tarlac City. *Joey A. Gableta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Police chief of Laguna town slain

CABUYAO, Laguna—The residents of this town are in a state of shock and are mourning over the killing of their town's chief of police, Supt. Eriberto B. Paglinawan, yesterday morning.

Police reports from Cabuyao police station said that Paglinawan was negotiating the national highway in Barangay Lumel in Silang, Cavite at about 7 a.m. when all of a sudden about three unidentified armed men blocked his path and started firing at him.

Paglinawan died instantly from the hail of bullets.

The assassination prompted town Mayor Proceso D. Aguillo to order an investigation.

Paglinawan had been described as an effective officer, according to municipal executive assistant Rumuel Batallones.

Batallones said the municipal leadership is planning to order all government offices in the municipality to put all Philippine flags at half-staff to express their collective grief over Paglinawan's murder.

PNP sources said Paglinawan may have become a target of communist guerrillas due to his deep involvement in various labor conflicts in this town, particularly the strike at Nestlé Phils. Inc.

Paglinawan, the sources said, had tried to interfere to keep the peace between striking workers and management of Nestlé.

"They said, perhaps some elements in the New People's Army were irked by the officer's (Paglinawan) active peacekeeping involvement in the conflicts between the workers and the company management in which he was misunderstood as being too pro-management," Batallones said.

The victim spent about three years as chief of the town's PNP and colleagues describe him as hardworking.

PNP-Cabuyao radio officer Robert Labigan told the INQUIRER that Paglinawan had just finished with his 24-hour duty and that at about 6:30 a.m. he left his PNP quarters here and was on his way home to Barangay Munting Ilog, Silang, Cavite when he was ambushed and fired upon 30 minutes later.

But a conflicting report from the Cavite police said Paglinawan was on his way to Cabuyao from his home in Silang when he was ambushed.

Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police director, said Paglinawan, who was aboard a white Toyota Corolla with license plate STS-725, was shot by the suspects who used .45 cal. and 9 mm pistols.

Radio reports quoted witnesses as seeing the suspects commandeering a private car as their getaway vehicle.

The ambush-slaying took place only a few kilometers away from the National Police Academy in Silang. *Romulo Ponte with a report from Fausto Tatad Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

A love affair with nature in Puerto Princesa

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Valentine's Day is not only for lovers. Nature deserves more love than anybody else.

Aside from the usual perks business establishments offer, this city celebrated Valentine's Day communing with nature.

Dubbed as Love Affair With Nature, the city government spearheaded an overnight camping, dancing and singing at the city sports complex, a hill facing the Puerto Princesa City Bay.

The residents trooped to Barangay San Jose to plant mangrove propagules yesterday morning.

Mangrove swamps provide excellent nesting and feeding areas for a variety of marine fish, invertebrates, and birds. A large number of fish species require mangroves for spawning, feeding, or protection from predators.

Mangroves also help control floods by storing water and slowly releasing it to downstream areas during floods. Healthy mangroves promote healthy coral reefs.

Palawan's mangrove forests, totaling about 45,872 hectares based on a survey conducted by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff in 1998, account for more than a third of the total mangrove cover of the country and contain majority of old growth mangrove stands still found in the Philippines.

Puerto Princesa has 7,369 hectares, the second largest mangrove cover in Palawan. The municipality of Bataraza has a remaining 9,567 hectares of mangrove forest.

The administration of Mayor Edward Hagedorn has been known for its Pista Y Ang Kagueban (a Cuyuno word that means feast of the forest). Every month of June, residents plant trees in denuded areas. For the last 10 years, hectares of mountains were planted with mahogany, mangium and paper trees.

Since the city has been successful in tree planting, this time the denuded mangrove areas deserve much attention.

Love affair with nature was designed to encourage individuals and families to become nature lovers.

City information officer Rodrigo Saucelo said that Valentine's Day is a perfect timing to get the message across.

Starting this year, mangrove planting will be a regular activity during Valentine's Day. Mayor Hagedorn also declared March 2, in time for the city's foundation anniversary, as Pista Y ang Bakawan (feast of the mangroves.) *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Anti-laundering flop threatens provinces' trade

THOUSANDS of small and medium scale businesses in the provinces face the threat of closure as a result of Congress' failure to pass amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law that comply with the requirements of an international laundering watchdog.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., head of the Phil. Chamber of Commerce and Industry, made this warning in a statement, saying thousands of workers stand to lose their jobs in these SMEs should the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) make good its threat to restrict financial transactions from the Philippines in international banks because of Congress' failure to pass the required amendments.

In his statement, Ortiz-Luis Jr. said local and foreign investors will opt to transfer their bases of operations in countries that are not in the FATF blacklist, depriving local SMEs of required capital.

He said should the FATF impose sanctions on the Philippines, some $35 billion in potential export earnings would go down the drain.

"It's high time that our legislators realized that rejection at this time is not an option. The only option that we have right now is full compliance to the requirements of the FATF despite our reservations to the same," he said in his statement.

Ortiz-Luis Jr., also head of the Phil. Exporters Confederation, said local traders would have difficulty transacting with international banks.

"We cannot afford to be hard-headed. Let's face it, the global market has its own rules, and we do not have any other option but to comply," he said.

Earlier, former Tourism Secretary Mina Gabor, head of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Foundation, supported Luis's view, saying SMEs comprise 99 percent of the firms that will be forced to close because of the sanctions.

Graft-ridden, solon says of Davao airport project

DAVAO CITY—The House committee on transportation reported that the P4.9-billion Davao International Airport could be one of the most graft-ridden government projects in the country.

Rep. Jacinto Paras, committee chair, said government officials have apparently connived with the lead firm in the DIA project, which would explain why the defects in the construction were left unchecked.

Paras also said his committee found that aside from making Korean firm Hanjin Engineering Inc. as project designer, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) also named it project manager and consultant at the same time.

Hanjin has since relinquished some of its functions, particularly the consultancy, to other firms.

But Paras said this did not change his belief that there was irregularity in the project.

"*Lutong macao*. There is no check and balance. We can assume there is connivance between DOTC personnel, officials on the award of the contract for the design to engineering consultancy," Paras said on Tuesday.

Paras said his committee wanted to dig deeper into the DIA project, the completion of which has been delayed for years already.

"We have strong suspicion that Hanjin is not doing the project as the main contractor but the subcontractor. But we will get more information as we would go along," he said.

Transportation Assistant Secretary Robert Castaares said a DOTC investigating team has concluded that DMJM International, one of the sub-contractors, was liable for the structural defects in the new terminal building.

The investigation, Castaares said, found that there was a mistake in the load calculation of the building specifications.

But he said DMJM has agreed to foot the bill for the rectification of the defects.

Paras sought the prosecution of those responsible for the defect. *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NBI launches child-friendly investigation room in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—To spare victims of child abuse from trauma while narrating their experiences in court, the National Bureau of Investigation here has inaugurated a child-friendly investigation room similar to a kindergarten classroom complete with children's books and toys.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco on Wednesday said the "state of the art studio" is equipped with video cameras to record the testimony of victims that would be submitted in court in lieu of their appearance.

Wycoco said the taped testimony would spare the victim the trauma of "recounting the gory details of the abuse in open court."

Only experienced social workers or psychologists are allowed to talk to a victim "and get the child to tell his or her story," he said.

Police investigators are allowed to watch the proceedings through a television outside the studio.

The P2-million studio is patterned after the facilities of the US FBI.

The NBI and the United Nation Children's Fund (Unicef) are building four similar studios in key cities in the country, Wycoco said.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Cordillera said at least 973 children were abused last year, compared to only 800 in 2001.

Lawyer Albert Muyot, Unicef project manager, said they would also provide a live television facility in family courts.

"We are providing the facility . . . so there would be no need to ask the child to sit at the witness stand and recount his or her experience," he said. *Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Romance puts female cadets on equal footing with male classmates

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ROSES among thorns: Female PMA cadets find themselves in a culture of their own at the PMA. TOOTS SOBERANO

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Whenever a young man invites a female cadet of the Philippine Military Academy for a date on Valentine's Day, the whole cadet corps erupts in whispered debates about how they should refer to him.

Before the first seven female cadets even set foot on this century-old institution in 1993, the stereotypical PMA cadet always referred to his date as a "Drag," until PMA's alumni eventually baptized their partners with the politically correct label "Kaydet Girl."

"Drag" is an adopted American military jargon, which refers to "a cadet's date in a hop." Kaydet Girl is perhaps one of the few Filipino jargons now in use at PMA, which dates back to 1934.

But the time has come for the "Drag" of male-dominated PMA to require a male counterpart, said Maj. Edgard Arevalo, PMA spokesperson.

Cadet Third Class Jhonna Blanza of Bontoc, Mt. Province, said it was their male counterparts who are pushing them to come up with a jargon for the female cadets.

As the PMA celebrates the 10th year of the entry of women into the military school, the male cadets appeared to have come to terms with the fact that the female cadets have developed their own PMA culture, a female cadet said.

It was not uncommon for Baguio residents nowadays to see male cadets walking smartly down Session Road in their crisp dress grays clasping bouquets of roses.

But lately female cadets in their gray uniforms have also been seen walking downtown Baguio with their bouquets, and this astounds many of their male classmates.

"Since 1993, male cadets had to adjust to the image of female cadets holding bouquets of roses, because if put in their shoes, a bouquet suggests that the cadets are off to court a lady. But if a woman cadet clasps the bouquet, what does that tell them? They're the ones being wooed, right?" a PMA instructor said.

"The boys have been able to survive the shock of women running sprints with them or enduring battle exercises, but year after year, no (male cadet) could resign himself to the image of female cadets holding roses without feeling a bit awkward."

A PMA study said the potential for fraternization among cadets is extremely high, and suggested strict regulations to discourage "this type of romance."

The sexual tensions are substantial.

PMA had graduated 65 female cadets out 121, who passed the PMA exams and who underwent military and academic training with their male counterparts in seven PMA batches.

Few of the women who failed the grade were quietly turned back or were discharged due to romance with fellow cadets, a PMA source said.

"Technically," said Cadet Third Class Geraldine Abigail Hallar, "the rules forbid all cadets from being involved because it would affect their training and their camaraderie."

But many female cadets, who did graduate, ended up marrying fellow soldiers, immediately after graduation, Hallar said.

Compared to military men, dating civilians have been hard for female cadets, she said, because boys tend to shy away.

"I went home to Bontoc for the Christmas break, and the men who I encountered pulled back when they discovered I am a cadet. I am the second female cadet in Mt. Province. They would always remark: 'Hey, she will beat us up,'" said Blanza.

Finding dates for PMA parties are equally difficult.

"I always could not find the words to ask a boy out to a hop. But we are all required to find dates like the male cadets. As a cadet, I am supposed to go to the boy's house and ask his parents' permission," said Cadet Fourth Class Amira Abdula of Tarlac.

Briefly, young cadets used the label "Dragon," to identify a female cadet's date.

"Dragon" was coined for male dates by the first batches of female cadets, said Arevalo.

"Dragon" is the most "macho"-sounding extension of "Drag," he said.

However, the female cadets continue to persevere, hoping that a better name can be used to avoid using the crass, but inevitable jargon "Kaydet Boy."

But these difficulties had not diluted the romance in today's female cadets.

Cadet Second Class Lily Beth Jamoralin, 22, is making her own Valentine card for her boyfriend, a PMA graduate, who is training in Bulacan.

TESDA workers, led by deputy director general Sonia Lipio, hold a rally in the compound of their main office in Taguig.

PHOTO FROM TESDA-ACE

Tesda workers protest failure to defend them

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—At least a hundred employees of the regional office of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) here Thursday lighted candles and shouted slogans in protest against their director general, Dante Liban, whom they said had "failed to defend them from scathing attacks in several newspapers."

Employees skipped their lunch break and gathered in front of the Tesda office on Zamora Street here to express their disgust over "misleading comments and unsubstantiated allegations" that tagged Tesda employees as being corrupt and involved in multi-billion rackets in accrediting performing artists for abroad.

"The employees of Tesda in Western Visayas express our disgust over the reckless generalizations in the media releases. These comments, though they tend to make heroes of some, cast aspersions on us, Tesda employees," said a statement signed by the Tesda employees.

The employees said these comments came out in the columns of Neal Cruz and Conrad Banal of the Philippine Daily INQUIRER and Vic Pascual of the Philippine Star early this month.

The Tesda employees suspected that the items came from press releases issued by Liban because the columns praised him for breaking the alleged syndicate inside Tesda and attributed statements to his associates.

The Tesda central office is in charge of accrediting artists and entertainers for deployment abroad through its Overseas Performing Artists program.

It identifies training centers where hopefuls could learn how to dance, sing and perform. After training, their skills are assessed by persons from the entertainment industry who have been appointed by Liban. Entertainers, who passed the test, are given artist record books by Tesda, attesting to their competence.

Members of the Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists said Tesda's accreditation process is susceptible to corruption to the dismay of thousands who train for performing abroad.

For example, blank artist record books are reportedly being sold at P20,000 to P25,000 apiece.

Quarrying threatening historic nat'l park

MALOLOS CITY—Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon supported moves of environmental groups in the province to stop the illegal quarry operations in the mountains of Bulacan to save the Biak-na-Bato National Park, the province's premier tourism destination.

Reports here said armed men have been illegal quarrying the mountains of Biak-na-Bato in the towns of San Miguel and Doña Remedios Trinidad.

During a forum on the rehabilitation of the Biak-na-Bato National Park on Wednesday here, Gordon challenged the 11 organizations that sponsored the forum to work hard and win the battle against illegal quarrying.

The historical park became the stronghold of Katipuneros against the Spanish troops. It was also in this park where the truce between the Philippines and Spain was forged.

"The success of any area as a tourism destination lies on the initiative of the local government. If the local government is weak, the nongovernment organizations and the media must be vigilant and fight those who are destroying your natural resources," Gordon said.

He said the Department of Tourism might not be able to give funds for the rehabilitation of the park but he promised that he would call the attention of other government agencies to revive and develop the Biak-na-Bato National Park.

Former Board Member Jose Munsayac said their reports indicated that New People's Army rebels have been fighting illegal quarry operators in the Biak-na-Bato mountains.

He said the NPA has identified some businessmen in San Miguel and Angat towns of funding illegal quarrying in the area. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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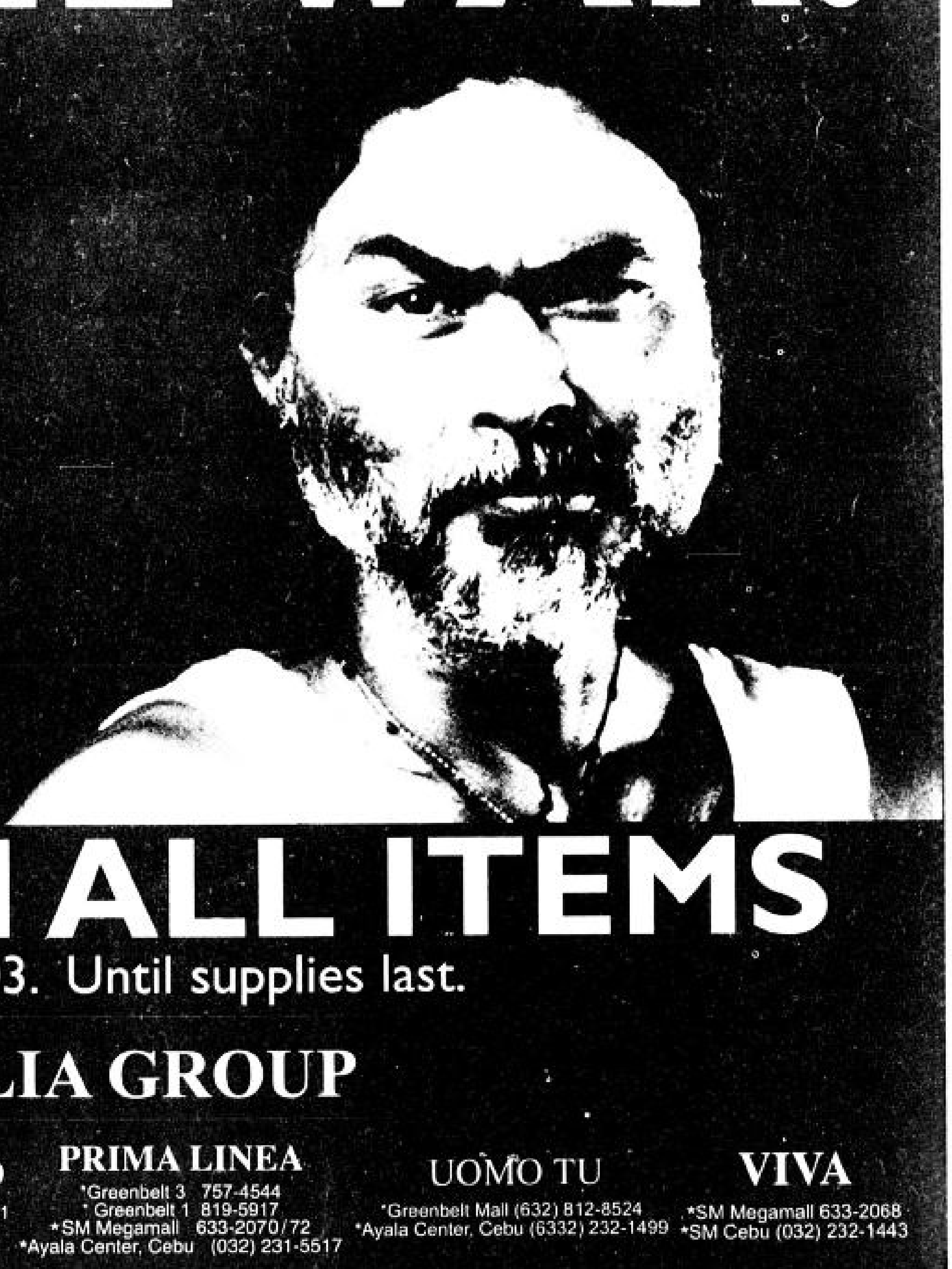

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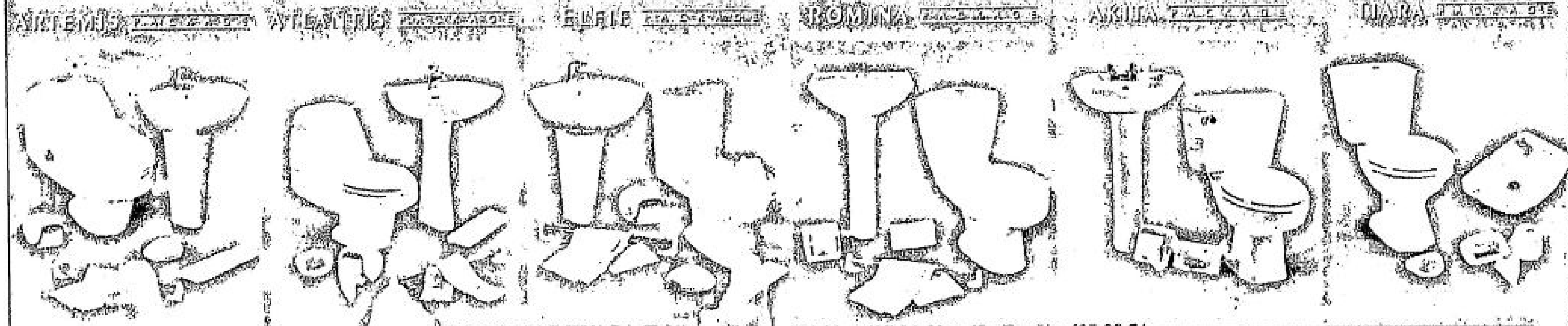

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INQUIRER Visayas
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◦ Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Javier slay trial: 17 yrs and going...

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
San Jose, Antique

A RECENT ruling of the Antique Regional Court denying bail to all but one of the accused in the murder of former Gov. Evelio Javier has renewed hopes that the 17-year-old case is progressing and justice will be finally served to the victims and the accused.

But the order also meant continued detention for the accused, many of whom have been in jail for more than 16 years.

In an order released Jan. 13, barely a month before Javier's 17th death anniversary, Judge Rudy Castrojas of the RTC Branch 12 denied the petition for bail of all accused, except Jose Seguerra who was allowed to post bail of P300,000.

Castrojas said there was evidence establishing the participation of former Antique Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador and his co-accused. He said the evidence was strong enough to deny the constitutional right of the accused to bail.

Also denied bail were Pacificador's son Rodolfo, Eduardo "Boy Muslim" Iran, former Philippine Constabulary Capt. John Paloy, Vicente Vegafria, Ramon Hortillano, Henry Salaver, Eleazar Idemne, Rolando Bernardino, Oscar Tiauson, Henry Seguerra, Jimmy Punzalan, and four persons known only as Akang, Noynoy, Tatang and Dolfo.

Strong evidence

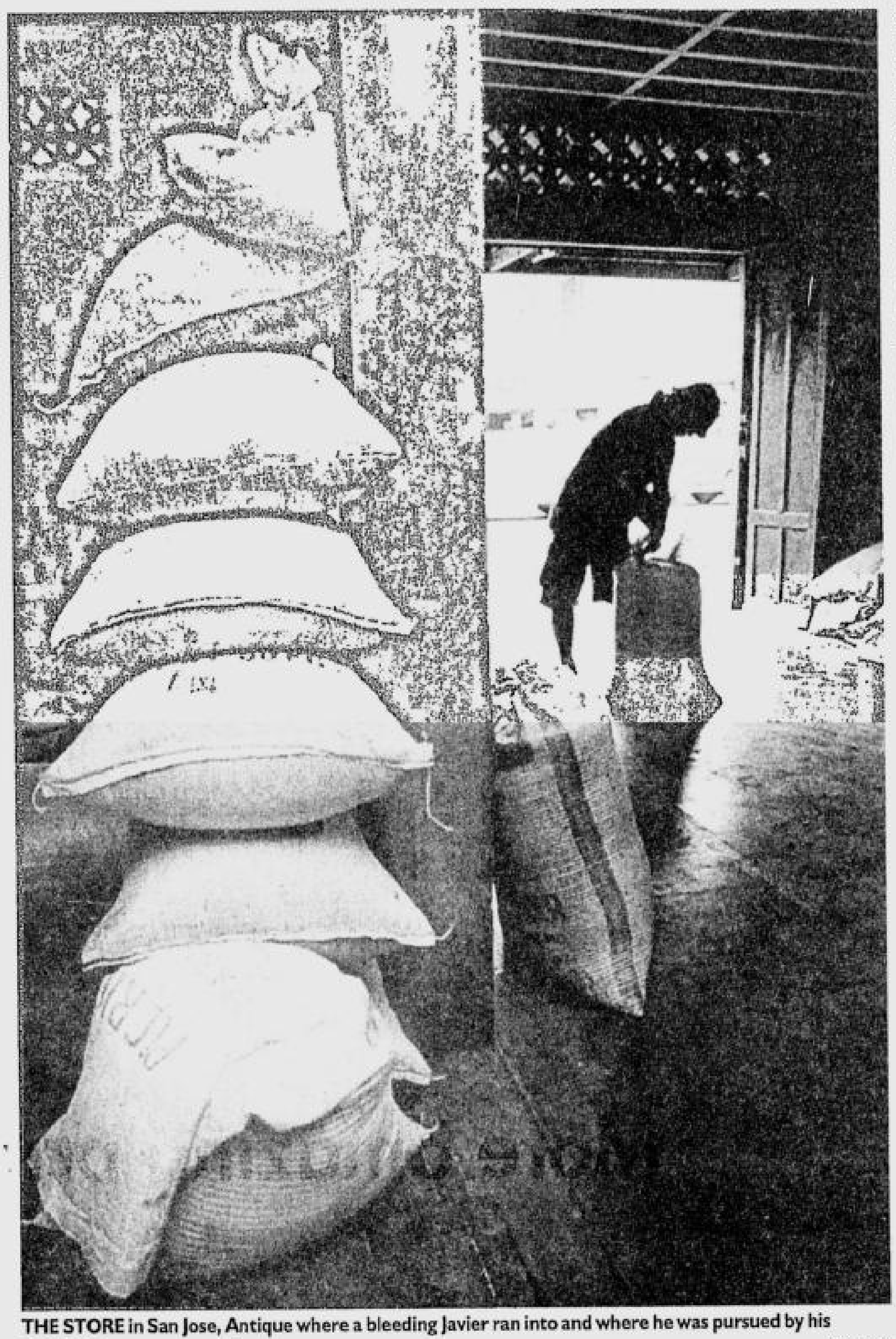
The judge cited the evidence presented by the prosecution which claimed that Iran, the alleged leader of the armed group that killed Javier, along with Jose Delumen met with Pacificador in the latter's house in Baltao, Parañaque on Jan. 5, 1986.

Pacificador allegedly gave an envelope containing money to Iran, who left for Antique the next day with some of the accused aboard a plane from the Villamor Airbase.

The group allegedly stayed at Pacificador's houses in Hamtic town and in Taringting in the capital town of San Jose before the killing.

In the morning of Feb 9, 1986, prosecution witnesses had said that Pacificador, along with his son and Iran, met at the assemblyman's rest house in Taringting. Later, Iran "gathered the members of the group and informed them that the 'Boss' has already given the go-signal to kill former Gov. Evelio Javier," the order read.

On Feb. 11, 1986, the group aboard two Nissan Patrol vehicles proceeded to the San Jose town plaza where Javier was monitoring the canvassing of votes cast during the "snap" presidential election. Javier was then a leader of the opposition fighting the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.



THE STORE in San Jose, Antique where a bleeding Javier ran into and where he was pursued by his assailants.
LYN RILLON

Iran, Paloy, Hortillano, Idemne and Vegafria allegedly shot Javier while he was talking with Blasito Juada, Divino Bermudes and Bernie Salcedo.

Javier was hit in the right shoulder in the initial bursts of gunfire but managed to run and hide in a bathroom at the back of the house of businessman Leon Pe.

Bermudes was hit in the right ankle and right elbow, while Salcedo was hit on the right forearm. Cabrera suffered injuries on his left foot, while Juada suffered abrasions and bruises after he rolled on the ground to avoid being hit.

Iran's group allegedly pursued and finished off Javier at the bathroom 250 meters away from the plaza. Dolores Barte, who had just come out of the bathroom, was hit in the right eye.

After shooting Javier, the group proceeded to Pacificador's house in Hamtic and the next day, to a house of his relative in Pototan, Iloilo, according to the court order.

Encouraging step

The denial of bail was considered a major victory for the prosecution and Javier's family.

Francis Gideon Javier, son of the slain former governor, said the court ruling was "a very encouraging step."

"I hope they go all the way and finally convict and take them to Bilibid (national penitentiary)," he said.

He said the order was a "big victory in a very much larger war" for their family. "We just have to take one step at a time."

Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera III, head of the prosecution panel, said they were pleased that "the judge saw that our evidence was strong." He said the court order was a welcome relief and showed there was real progress in the case.

Dacera said the prosecution would still determine if more evidence would be presented. Under court rules, all evidence presented during the petition for bail are automatically admitted in the trial.

Injustice

Pacificador and his co-accused have maintained their innocence.

The former Marcos ally who has been tagged as the mastermind, said the order was based on the "inconsistent statements" of prosecution witnesses, including four accused-turned-state-witnesses.

THIS IS
THE FUTURE
CONGRESS N

PACIFICADOR, the accused mastermind of the Javier killing, wearing his ambition on his shirt.
LYN RILLON

"It has been 17 years of injustice for us," said Pacificador from his house inside the compound of the Antique provincial jail. The walls of the house are full of his prized pictures and memorabilia, including framed photographs of him and former first lady Imelda Marcos and those taken when he presided the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Pacificador has a pending appeal on the order denying bail to the accused. He said he was willing to bring the issue to higher courts even if this meant a longer trial.

But the long detention and the slow pace of the case have taken their toll on the accused.

"I am dismayed. It hurts a lot but what can we do?" said ex-PC Capt. John Paloy. He has been in jail since Feb. 13, 1986 and is one of the longest detained.

"We expected to post bail because the prosecution witnesses fabricated their statements. But we are still looking for a bright future," said Paloy.

Suffering from diabetes, he longed to be with his wife and family in Baguio City.

He insisted that he was innocent and believed he would be vindicated. "We don't stop praying and still walk with our heads up high."

Wanted

Another accused, Rolando Bernardino, had escaped from jail.

Detained since November 1988, Bernardino was allegedly the driver of one of the vehicles used by the gunmen. He is believed to be suffering from the advance stage tuberculosis and feared that he would die in jail without seeing his family.

Pacificador's son Rodolfo, Iran and three others remain free.

Iran, one of the country's most wanted men and carries a P1-million reward for his arrest, was reportedly killed or seriously wounded in Malaysia three years ago, but the report could not be confirmed.

The younger Pacificador is in Canada where he fled after the killing. The Philippine government has appealed to the Canadian Supreme Court a ruling issued last year by the Ontario Court of Appeal denying the petition to extradite Pacificador to the Philippines to face trial.

Dacera said they would use the court order denying bail to the accused in the extradition case. But the elder Pacificador said the denial of bail after 17 years only highlighted their assertion that the Philippine courts have not given them a speedy trial.

More years of trial

Despite the court order, all parties expect more years of trial, which has already resulted in a growing disinterest in bringing Javier's killers to justice.

On Javier's 17th death anniversary on Feb. 11, thousands of Antiqueños still joined separate ceremonies remembering their fallen hero.

The event was marred by growing animosity between the camps of Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez and Rep. Exequiel Javier, who led separate ceremonies in Pandan and San Jose.

But the people are hoping that their political leaders will transcend their bickering and, for their sake, live out what Javier stood and died for.

Old Bisayan fables, new lessons

VINTAGE VIEW

Rolando O. Borrinaga

OF COURSE, most of us are familiar with the fable, "The Monkey and the Turtle." Even Dr. Jose Rizal, our national hero, was known to have made comics illustrations of it for a young relative.

The story as we know it now has the Monkey always trying to trick the Turtle. But somehow the Turtle always ends up outwitting his supposedly wiser adversary.

The Turtle's victory over every imaginable adversary is a common theme of folklore all over the world. This is associated with the universal belief that mankind sympathizes with the oppressed and the disadvantaged.

However, it is not well known that the earliest version of the fable in the Philippines was recorded in 1668 by Fr. Francisco Ignacio Alcina, who spent much of his life serving the Leyte-Samar region. The Jesuit missionary immortalized our region, the original Islas de Bisayas, through his manuscripts.

The main difference between the fable that Alcina recorded and the current version is in the perspective. The early Bisayans had it that it was the Turtle who always tried to trick the Monkey, until the Monkey inflicted his righteous revenge. The new perspective is exactly opposite the old one.

The old Bisayan fable went this way:

The Turtle and the Monkey found by chance a sprout of banana plant called *sahaan*. They fought over who would take the best part. In order to deceive the Monkey, the Turtle asked for the part that had the leaves. This part seemed best for the Monkey, who was allowed to keep it.

The Monkey, in turn, gave the Turtle the part with the root, which was what the Turtle actually wanted because it is what sprouts, grows and bears fruit. The Turtle gave signs of wanting the opposite so that the Monkey would let the Turtle get what he wanted, which was more profitable.

Eventually, the piece of stalk that the Turtle got sprouted, grew and bore fruits. Since he could not climb and get the fruit, the Turtle went to find the Monkey and asked him to climb and get the fruit. The Monkey did this gladly and, once seated above, he began to gather the bananas and ate them.

The Monkey threw all the peelings to the Turtle down below, a revenge for the first trick he received from the Turtle.

The original lesson intended by the fable was this: A man of intrigues and plots was like a Turtle, whose intestines have many twists and turns. Though small, the Turtle certainly knew a lot, since he was able to trick the Monkey, who was supposedly larger and wiser.

Anyway, the Monkey eventually got his revenge. And when somebody gave another fellow the worst part, the early Bisayans would say they treated him like a Turtle, and justly so.

Sadly, the world has turned upside down on us since 1668. In a world of Monkeys and Turtles, the old Monkeys have become the modern Turtles. And they seem proud and righteous to have become so. No wonder we have become a nation of born-losers.

Alcina also recorded the local fable about how bats got their name and the reason they would only go out at night. The tale went this way:

After their creation, all birds got together for each one to choose his food. So that they would not be taking each other's food, each was to choose according to his desire and taste.

When the big bat's turn came, he chose the fruit of a tree called *tabigi*, which is beautiful to the eye, as big as a medium melon, and, seen from a distance, very much like the big oranges from China.

The other birds made fun of the bat because his chosen food has nothing inside but a few seeds as large as eggs, although of different sizes to fill the shell. The seeds are very hard, bitter and tasteless. (The seeds were very good for curing diarrhea among humans, most especially the bloody type, although the birds did not seem to know this property.)

From this incident, the bat was given the name *kabug*, which means dunce, or one who has little sense (i.e., *bobo* in Tagalog). The shame associated with the name was believed to have influenced the bats to go out only at night.

The early Bisayans had a saying that was very appropriate for many occasions. When one of them selected what pleases the eye without checking its quality—like a beautiful but foolish woman or a handsome but stupid man, or a fruit of good color but rotten, etc.—they said of him, "*Daw napili sin tabigi* (Like a chooser of tabigi)."

Like the *kabug*, this person had chosen the *tabigi* fruit, good to look at but nothing else.

Now, modern Bisayans routinely elect *tabigi* types to public office. The chosen ones mostly looked nice at first, but many of them eventually proved to have little sense of duty.

Who then are the ultimate *kabug*? Of course, the ones who chose the *tabigi*.

However, the labels are no longer as clearly defined as they used to be. In our present political climate, many choosers and their chosen, by their seemingly habitual show of bad example, now qualify to be called *tabigi* and *kabug* at the same time.

No wonder our political life is in such a mess.

3 US soldiers, 6 solons sue Bush

From page A1

he filed the civil lawsuit in Boston federal court. Bonifaz, who is seeking an injunction against Bush on constitutional grounds, brought the suit on behalf of three members of the military, six parents of US troops and six members of Congress, including Democratic Representatives John Conyers (Michigan) and James McDermott (Washington).

"We worry about Joe," Nancy Lessin said of her stepson now stationed somewhere in the Gulf. "We don't want him to be wounded or die, and we don't want him to be forced to wound or kill innocent Iraqi civilians. That would kill a part of him and a part of us."

The suit, which also names Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as a defendant, noted that the framers of the US Constitution aimed to deny presidents the imperial war-making powers of European monarchs, and said the administration's plans for war on Iraq would violate that separation of powers.

Bonifaz said Bush did not obtain the authority to invade Iraq in October when Congress easily passed a resolution backing the possible use of force against Baghdad. He said the October resolution was unconstitutional.

"Congress could not have ceded the authority to declare war to the president any more than it could have to the Supreme Court," the lawyer said. "A war against Iraq without a congressional declaration of war will be illegal and unconstitutional."

The lawsuit also said the plaintiffs would suffer irreparable harm if Bush proceeds with an invasion of Iraq.

Many of the plaintiffs, including the three active members of the military and two of the parents, withheld their names in fear of possible repercussions.

But Charley Richardson and Nancy Lessin of Boston said they had attached their names to protect Richardson's 25-year-old son Joe, an Arab-language-trained radio reconnaissance commando in the US Marines.

"From our perspective, those who say we gotta go to war aren't going anywhere, nor are their loved ones. It's other people's children who are now in harm's way," Lessin said.

But if history is any indication, the suit's prospects are dim.

In 1990, 54 Democratic congressmen launched a similar legal challenge to prevent Bush's father, then President George H. W. Bush, from forcing Iraqi troops out of Kuwait without congressional approval.

A federal judge rejected that suit as flawed because the 54 plaintiffs did not represent a majority of Congress.

Devastation

In Washington, representatives of some 90 US city councils gathered to deliver to the White House resolutions opposing military actions against Iraq.

Many of them argued that such a war would devastate their economies, organizers of the campaign said.

"War will be financed by deficit spending and drastic cuts in domestic spending. The sons and daughters of American cities will be recruited to fight and even die in that war," Chicago alderman Joe Moore said.

The city representatives told a news conference that resources in their jurisdictions were already severely stretched and the country could not afford a war.

"In my city, our homeless shelters are jammed. In fact we are turning people away nightly," said Detroit councilwoman Maryann Mahaffey.

The campaign to pass city resolutions is being coordinated by the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal think tank and political action group. Its organizer, Karen Dolan, said anti-war resolutions were pending in 100 more towns and cities.

In the Asia Pacific, hundreds of thousands of anti-war demonstrators prepared for a weekend of protests against the looming US-led war on Iraq. *Inquirer wires*

Baby named 'Jihad'

From page A1

Welfare and Development reported yesterday.

Some 30,000 Sabah deportees were processed by the DSWD in a span of 10 months last year. Thus far, in five days of fighting, some 51,000 individuals have already fled their homes in Central Mindanao, she said.

The Sabah deportation only looked "massive" in media reports because people arrived in big boats, she said.

"I don't think there's still hope for my first baby," she told the INQUIRER.

Fatima's husband, Mokammad, was left behind to watch over their farm, not worried by stray bullets coming from either the government troops or the rebels.

Farming is the primary lifeblood of some 45,000 families in Pikit.

Fatima said if Jihad could only beg for a ceasefire, he would.

The situation in evacuation centers is like hell as there is no ventilation.

In a huge warehouse in Barangay Buisan, at least 4,676 evacuees stay in a stockroom intended for their farm produce.

Many fear the outbreak of communicable diseases because of congestion. Dr. Edwin Cruzado, municipal health officer, said persons ill with these diseases must be isolated.

The problem, he said, is that there is no place to house those who are sick.

The evacuees share common plates when eating the relief food consisting of sardines and monggo.

"This is what we could have," said 4-year old Mana Kanakan, adding that in their home, they eat bangus, tilapia and vegetables.

Kanakan's family keeps a garden of eggplant, string beans, cabbage and sweet potatoes.

Only two doctors, three nurses and 20 volunteers take turns in checking on the thousands of evacuees. Cruzado said they need more.

There was even a shortage of medicines. "We don't have much more medicines to distribute," Cruzado said.

He also proposed the setting up of bathing cubicles, toilet and drainage system.

Social worker Imelda Balios said the evacuees also need blankets, mosquito nets, mattresses and water containers for drinking water.

Donations needed

Fr. Roberto Layson, this town's parish priest, told the INQUIRER that the number of the displaced residents rose to 38,000 people in Pikit alone. He continued to appeal for help. He said the evacuees needed the following:

Food: Rice, Sardines, Dried fish, Beans, Noodles, Coffee/Milk, Sugar/Salt

Medicines: Paracetamol, Antibiotics, Anti-diarrheals, Vitamins, Skin ointments and anti-tussives

Other needs: Soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Mats, Slippers, Mosquito Nets, Cooking utensils, Sacks and Water containers

There is also an urgent need for volunteer doctors and other workers.

Fr. Layson may be reached at the Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral in Pikit North Cotabato through telephone number:064-393-1402.

Layson said the capture of the Kabasalan stronghold could be considered an empty victory.

"There are two phases of wars. One is in the battlefields and the other is in the evacuation centers. People are fighting for their survival. The guns may be silent but the suffering of the people continue in the evacuation centers. For how long I do not know," he said.

Amla rejected; sanctions start on March 15

From page A1

with FATF and help legislator's recast the anti-money laundering law (Amla) after the new amendments were rejected by the FATF.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Macapagal was saddened by the FATF action.

Contingency measures

Bracing for possible sanctions, the Bangko Sental ng Pilipinas yesterday ordered the country's 43 commercial banks to draw up contingency measures, such as an emergency loan facility for the families of overseas Filipino workers and a credit window for exporters.

"The worst case scenario is if the correspondent banks cut off lines with Philippine banks," Deputy BSP Governor Alberto Reyes told reporters. "But we don't know how severe the situation will be since we don't know what the sanctions will be."

On Thursday, the House-Senate bicameral committee agreed to lower the threshold for bank transactions to be investigated from the present P4 million to about P540,000. But it retained a provision that requires court permission before a suspect bank account can be investigated, unless it involves cases of kidnapping for ransom, drug trafficking or acts of terrorism.

Anticipating rejection

While waiting all day for the FATF's decision,President Macapagal already anticipating a rejection, had instructed the Bangko Sentral to ask the FATF for more time to meet its standards.

Bunye said Ms Macapagal had also directed Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo to enlist the support of the United States through its ambassador, Francis Ricciardone.

She instructed as well the labor and finance departments and the Office of the Press Secretary to inform all overseas Filipino workers of the effect of the FATF sanctions on their transactions and remittances and how to mitigate these effects.

"She appeals to all decision-makers to protect the national interest, particularly the welfare of OFWs and their families," Bunye said. "She emphasizes that her administration has pushed for the Amla amendments as these would ensure the unhampered flow of foreign exchange for the benefit of OFWs and business."

No surprise

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the 30-day period would give Congress enough time to amend the law in line with FATF requirements.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the FATF decision "does not come as a surprise."

"Obviously, we can no longer ask for an extension, but we have a small window to amend our law so we can avoid its countermeasures," he said.

Earlier at the Senate, Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III assailed Buenaventura for supposedly acting more like a spokesperson of the FATF and for allegedly sabotaging the Philippines' effort to be stricken off the blacklist.

A well-placed source said the FATF found the Amla passed in 2001 insufficient to curtail money laundering and lacking teeth in tracking down illegally acquired money.

The President did not sign the measure yesterday so Congress could further amend it to the FATF's satisfaction.

"It will not be advisable for her to sign the document now because [this] would foreclose the possibility of [further] amending the law without having to go ... back to square one," Bunye told reporters in the morning.

"Our next action will depend on the announcement of the FATF," he said.

The Senate and the House of Representatives passed only one of the three key amendments sought by the FATF.

On Thursday night after the Senate and the House passed the amendments to the Amla, Malacañang indicated it was not satisfied. The FATF sanctions are expected to make the Philippines' offshore trade and financial transactions more costly and lengthy.

The OFW who used to be able to send money home in two to three days will now need a week or two, or even longer, once the penalties are imposed, according to bankers. *With reports from Gerald G. Lacuarta and Cynthia D. Balana, Inquirer wires*

Danding: I don't want it ...

From page A1

decide whom we will support," he added.

The Nationalist People's Coalition of which Cojuangco is founder entered into a coalition with the Lakas NUCD in the 2001 polls.

Puentevella said he is not one of the 50 Lakas solons who signed a confidential letter urging Cojuangco to be their standard-bearer in 2004.

Puentevella said that he did not sign the confidential letter in deference to the President's request for the Lakas-CMD to act collectively.

"I am a team player," he said, although he said he believed Cojuangco was qualified to be president.

"Besides it is too early to talk politics, the President has asked us to support her programs," he added.

Cojuangco, NPC founder and chair emeritus, was happy and "very receptive" when presented with the petition signed by 50 Lakas members in the House.

Paras said Cojuangco told him: "I'm not interested and I don't need it. I'm happy where I am but I am also a Filipino. If duty calls, who am I to refuse?"

"My analysis is he will go for it. It will really be a sacrifice on (his) part to run but my feeling is, he will go for it," said Paras, who's chair of the House committee on transportation.

The 50 Lakas congressmen urged Cojuangco to run, saying they felt he was the only one who could turn the country around and stop it from "eventual perdition."

Signatories

Among the signatories to the petition were Representatives Paras, Edelmiro Amante (Agusan del Norte), Apostol Trinidad (Leyte), Josephine Ramirez-Sato (Oriental Mindoro), Robert Ace Barbers (Surigao del Norte), Antonio Floirendo (Davao del Norte), Ernesto Nieva (Manila), Jose Solis (Sorsogon), Angel Carloto (Zamboanga del Norte), Rodolfo Albano (Isabela), Herminio Teves (Negros Oriental), Luis Bersamin Jr. (Abra), Faysah Dumarpa (Lanao del Sur), Ismael "Chuck" Mathay (Quezon City) and Erwin Chiongbian (Sarangani).

Paras said some of the signatories did not want their names disclosed for now.

Negros Occidental Representatives Jose Apolinario Lozada of the fifth district and Jose Carlos Lacson of the third district also claimed they did not sign the "confidential" letter.

Lacson said he did not sign because "maybe we should ask the man first if he's interested to run."

"(Cojuangco) knows that if he runs for president, I will be there," he added.

If Cojuangco was not interested to run, floating his name as a possible contender could make him and his businesses the target of the Filipino crab mentality, Lacson said.

Lacson pointed out that Cojuangco has put all his efforts in making the food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. bigger and stronger.

Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro Jr., leader of the NPC in the House where it is the second biggest party, thanked the Lakas petitioners but said it was too early to talk about the candidacy of his uncle.

"That will be up to him, not the party to decide," he said but stressed that Cojuangco was not interested to run for president anew after giving it a try in 1992.

Cojuangco placed third in the 1992 presidential elections won by President Fidel Ramos. Teodoro is Cojuangco's favorite nephew and right-hand man in the NPC.

"I'm really grateful to them (Lakas petitioners) for their confidence in my uncle but at this point, he's not interested because he is devoted to San Miguel," he said.

"The door is not closed but the clamor should be very, very, very strong to convince him (to run)," Teodoro told the INQUIRER. "

LDP, too

Members of two other parties, the LDP and Alayon, called up the INQUIRER to voice support for Cojuangco.

Ex-Rep. Miguel Romero even said the LDP, of which he is a member, would go for Cojuangco the moment he announces or merely says he is interested.

"Majority, not just of the LDP but Lakas and all other parties will gravitate to Cojuangco because we need someone who can run the economy and handle peace and order," Romero said.

He said he called up Sen. Edgardo Angara, LDP president, yesterday morning to seek his permission for him to join the Lakas draft for Cojuangco. Angara told him to go for it.

Former Congressman Eduardo Gullas, now mayor of Talisay City in Cebu, called up the INQUIRER to add his vote to the Cojuangco-for-president campaign.

Gullas, secretary general of the regional party Alayon of Cebu, said he is urging President Macapagal when she feels the time is right, to anoint Cojuangco as the administration standard-bearer.

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Bush to visit Manila in October

From page A1

Philippine Caucus, Philippine Ambassador to the US Alberto del Rosario said Ms Macapagal was "only the third foreign leader to be invited for a state visit" by Bush."

"The way I see it, this year is a perfect Triple Crown for the Philippines," said Bower. "We started tonight with the Philippine Caucus, we have the state visit of Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo to the US in April, and President Bush will visit the Philippines in October."

"I don't know if he'd go before or after Apec," Bower said, and surmised that Bush would go "during the Apec visit." The Apec leaders' meeting is scheduled on Oct. 20-21.

The Triple Crown refers to *tour de force* triumphs in three major horse races: the Churchill-Downs in Louisville, Kentucky; the Pimlico in Maryland; and the Belmont Stakes in New York. It is the equivalent of a grand slam in tennis, or victories in all four major tournaments in Australia, France, Wimbledon and the United States in one year.

Ambassador Del Rosario declined to comment on the supposed Bush visit. But he pointed out to the INQUIRER Bush's phone call to Ms Macapagal on Feb. 11 to express appreciation for her leadership in the global war against terrorism, among other things.

At his daily noon briefing Feb. 11, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said Bush began that day with calls to three foreign leaders: Ms Macapagal, the Angolan president and British Prime Minister Tony Blair—a detail that Malacañang also announced in a statement in Manila.

Fleischer said that in their phone conversation, the American and Philippine Presidents said they were "looking forward" to Ms Macapagal's state visit to Washington on April 2.

It is customary for a leader of a country invited to make a state visit to the United States to extend a reciprocal invitation to the US President.

The Philippine Caucus is a network of US congressmen—55 from the Republican and Democratic parties at last count—who are working to advance RP-US relations.

Among the objectives of the network co-chaired by California Representatives Darrel Issa (Rep.) and Bob Filner (Dem.) is to help facilitate passage of legislation important to the Philippines and the United States.

Security cooperation

Bower of the US-Asean Business Council said the current focus of RP-US relations was "obviously on security cooperation."

He said he did not think there would be any agreements signed during Ms Macapagal's state visit, but added that his group hoped "to begin negotiations on a new trade agreement" with the Philippines next year.

Philippine watchers in Washington have observed that the manner in which the Macapagal administration expelled an Iraqi diplomat suspected of links with the Abu Sayyaf bandit group had upset not only diplomatic circles but major American investors as well.

The investors are reportedly threatening to pull out of contracts being readied for the state visit.

Iraqi Second Secretary Husham Hussain and his family left the Philippines Wednesday night. Baghdad has denied that Hussain had any links to terrorism.

Del Rosario told the INQUIRER that the meeting between Bush and Ms Macapagal would take place at 9 a.m. on April 2 at the White House Oval Office.

He said the talking points as well as Ms Macapagal's schedule were still being finalized.

Earlier this month the INQUIRER learned from other sources that the Philippine President would have three full working days during her state visit. The first day will include a state dinner at the White House.

Ms Macapagal will also meet with the Philippine Caucus during her visit. The customary dinner with the US-Asean Business Council is set on April 3.

Her schedule likewise includes a meeting with the American Chamber of Commerce in New York. On her last day, she will fly to Chicago and then to San Francisco to meet with members and leaders of Filipino-American communities.

Bilateral partnership

At the launch, Del Rosario quoted Ms Macapagal as saying that the Philippine Caucus "strengthens the bilateral partnership" between the two nations and "addresses the concerns of the growing Filipino-American community."

The eight American congressmen who turned up at the Wednesday night event pledged support for the health care bill for Filipino war veterans, which Representative Filner re-introduced Tuesday as House Resolution No. 664.

The measure is the sister bill to the legislation re-filed Jan. 8 by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (Dem., Hawaii).

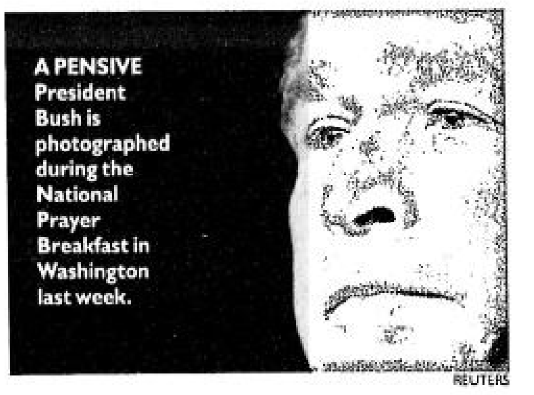
Among those who spoke briefly at the launch were some of the Caucus' original co-sponsors: Representatives Bobby Cortez Scott (Dem., Virginia), a Filipino-American; Randy "Duke" Cunningham and Dana Rohrabacher (Rep., California), Lane Evans (Dem., Illinois).

A number of the congressmen in the network have Filipino-Americans among their constituents, particularly in California and Hawaii.

Rep. Juanita Millender McDonald (Dem., California) said 30 percent of her constituents were Filipino-Americans.

Rep. Madeleine Bardollo (Dem., Guam) noted that both Guam and the Philippines were discovered by Ferdinand Magellan, "so we're connected."

The US-Asean Business Council, with corporate hosts Edison Mission Energy, Boeing, FedEx, Halliburton, InterGen, Mirant, Unysis, Unocal and UPS, sponsored the event.



A PENSIVE President Bush is photographed during the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington last week.

REUTERS

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Mexico cops . . .

From page A1

graft was revealed on street-side video cameras trained on police and motorists to combat bribe-taking. On Thursday, Mexico City officials detained four police officers who were allegedly offering receipts for payoffs.

The officers pulled over a car which bore only decorative license plates—not official ones—and took a bribe; then they gave the driver a sort of pass.

"They gave him a piece of paper with the seal of the Public Safety Department and some coded words," said Gabriel Regino, the department's assistant director.

The code meant "no other patrol car could pull him over, issue a ticket or ask for another bribe," Regino said.

Not only that: as soon as the officers saw a video camera focused on them, "they asked the motorist to move his car ahead, in order to get into the camera's blind spot."

Under a law that went into effect Monday, drivers can be arrested and jailed for up to three years for giving bribes.

That desire to "protect" the motorist is nothing new in the civilized world of graft in Mexico City.

Cops have long taken money to allow pollution-causing cars on the road, and—as part of the price—escort the driver to his destination so no other hungry cop will hit him up again.

It's all part of what Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called "a complex issue," with city residents complaining of corruption in the police force, but many also preferring a quick bribe to a hefty fine.

"The important thing is to build a public consensus to both guarantee public safety and clean up the corruption," Lopez Obrador said during a news conference on Thursday. "But it's nothing that can be done by decree, it has to do with a will for change, honorableness, an end to impunity."

Those are good intentions, but they run up against a whole social system of bribery, an etiquette built up over decades.

For example, there are recognized units for bribes, the lowest being a 50-cent bribe known as the "soft drink," as in the plaintive whine of the lowly street-corner cop: "Give me something for a soft drink."

The highest commonly accepted bribe is exactly one-half the cost of paying the corresponding traffic ticket, often about $30.

When it comes to who should bring up the subject of a payoff—the motorist or the policeman—the answer is neither. The motorist waits until the cop asks, "Well, youngster, what shall we do about this?"

It's also considered socially incorrect to place the bribe in the policeman's hand. The officer opens a bound copy of the transit law to show the motorist the law he violated; the driver is expected to slip a bill into the pocket-sized book.

And while cops never say "thank you" for a bribe, they do give a friendly little parting reminder.

Because officers are encouraged to caution motorists for not wearing seatbelts, and knowing they might be under surveillance by the video cameras, the policeman's parting words are invariably, "Buckle up your seatbelt, for safety's sake."

Still, the new anti-corruption campaign—which has so far resulted in the detention of at least one motorist and about a dozen cops—may change things. Suggestions have already arisen for new etiquette—to better hide bribery. *Report from AP*

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Elite US troops in Iraq

SMALL units of elite US Special Operations forces are busily operating inside several areas of Iraq to lay the foundation for a possible invasion of the country, US and defense officials said yesterday.

The officials confirmed a Washington Post report that the shadowy, highly trained forces were stepping up contacts with opposition groups and helping plan for rapid seizure of large portions of Iraq should US President George W. Bush give the order to go to war.

US intelligence has detected movement by the Iraqi military of large amounts of explosives into southern Iraq, perhaps to destroy oil infrastructure in the event of a sweep northward by more than 50,000 US troops already in Kuwait, according to the officials who asked not to be identified.

One US official told Reuters that the numbers of Special Operations troops moving in and out of Iraq in recent weeks were small, but would not confirm reports that at least some had been attached as paramilitary operatives to the civilian Central Intelligence Agency.

Defense officials told Reuters recently that small numbers of American troops had been operating in the Kurdish-controlled area of northern Iraq. But they suggested that operations at the time were limited to that area.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, while refusing to confirm or discuss any such deployments inside Iraq, lashed out at the leaks of military information.

"I think they are disgraceful. They are unprofessional.

They're dangerous. They put people's lives at risk," he told the US Senate Armed Services Committee when asked about reports involving such secret deployments.

"Leakers," he said, "ought to be in jail." *Reuters*

UN inspectors report key to Security Council decision

From page A1

missile systems, has imported parts that could be used for a nuclear program, and still isn't cooperating 100 percent, UN officials said. Their findings, coming as the United States and Britain prepare for war with Iraq, could bolster the US case with allies or further di- vide the Security Council, badly split over whether the time has come to use force to disarm Saddam Hussein.

Iraq's UN Ambassador Mohammed Al-Douri went to see Blix yesterday about the report. "I'm worried," Al-Douri said afterward. "It's a question of war and peace."

The United States and Britain may float a resolution as early as this weekend seeking some sort of authorization for the use of force to give any invasion international legitimacy, although language may fall short of an explicit call for war.

But they face an uphill fight as France, Germany, Russia, China, Syria and other council members are expected to argue that the inspectors' reports show that their work, which only resumed in late November 2002, should continue.

To make their points, at least 10 foreign ministers—US Secretary of State Colin Powell, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov among them—are attending the meeting which started at 11:15 last night, Manila time.

Yesterday, Powell told the House of Representatives Budget Committee: "The issue is Iraqi compliance, not how many inspectors for how long." US President George W. Bush also sought to frame the decision facing the Security Council in similar terms.

"The decision is this for the United Nations: When you say something, does it mean anything? You've got to decide," Bush told thousands of sailors gathered at a Florida naval base in a display of military might.

ElBaradei told Reuters late on Thursday that he believed inspections should continue for a few more months providing Iraq cooperates. Blix, responsible for Iraq's chemical, biological and missile programs, has refrained from giving any time estimate.

"Iraq still has a chance to exonerate itself but time is critical," said ElBaradei, head of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency. "They can't afford but to have 100 percent cooperation."

At issue is whether the United States and Britain can follow up Friday's meeting with a resolution that would explicitly or implicitly authorize war. Britain is anxious to give any military force international legitimacy.

So far Russia, China and France, who have veto power on the 15-member council, as well as Germany, Syria and other members want to beef up inspections, triple the number of arms experts and send in UN security guards to "freeze" suspected sites.

On the latest controversy over long-range missiles, Blix may well say that while it appears Iraq is in violation of Security Council resolutions, he will give Baghdad a chance to respond before taking any steps to destroy the hardware.

A panel of six independent experts he organized this week determined that Iraq's Al Samoud 2 missile project is illegal because its range exceeds the 150-km limit first set down in a 1991 Security Council resolution.

Blix and ElBaradei will also report on their trip to Baghdad last weekend at which they won concessions from Iraq on private interviews with Iraqi scientists, the use of U-2 spy planes and legislation banning weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq set some conditions on the U-2 overflights but UN officials said Blix would consider them as suggestions only. Of the interviews, few have been held without minders and some included tape recorders taken in by the scientists.

The moves fall short of the complete and genuine turnaround Blix said he was hoping for when he left for meetings with Iraqi officials last week.

"We're still in midcourse," ElBaradei told the Associated Press in an interview Thursday on a flight from Vienna to New York. "But we are moving forward, and I see no reason for us to bring the inspection process to a halt."

ElBaradei also said he did not consider war a foregone conclusion provided "we see some progress on the part of Iraq" in revealing any hidden weapons of mass destruction.

In his report, ElBaradei will raise remaining questions about material that could be used to revive Iraq's nuclear program.

Concerns identified by ElBaradei on Thursday included "the questions of aluminum tubes, the question of importation of magnets, and the question of importation of carbon fiber" as well as reported imports of uranium.

He suggested his report will not give a definite use for aluminum tubing because "we are still conducting investigations" based on additional information from the Iraqis.

Intense lobbying

The United States and Britain hope to get the minimum nine positive votes required for adoption of a resolution and possibly risk a veto. France is conducting a similar lobbying effort in hopes a US move toward war will not get the minimum votes and spare it a veto.

Both Powell and his British counterpart, Jack Straw, are attending the meeting. Immediately afterward, they will meet privately with the 13 other members of the council.

Both Washington and London seized on a UN finding that Iraq has missiles of prohibited range to bolster their case that Iraq is harboring banned weapons.

Iraq several weeks ago told inspectors the discrepancy in the missiles' range was attributable to the fact the missiles were not weighted during tests with guidance controls and a full payload of warheads. The expert panel rejected this.

But Russia's deputy foreign minister, Yuri Fedotov, a member of the board that met the other day, told reporters: "Inspections should continue. It's clear." He called the missile report a "technical violation" rather than a breach of council demands.

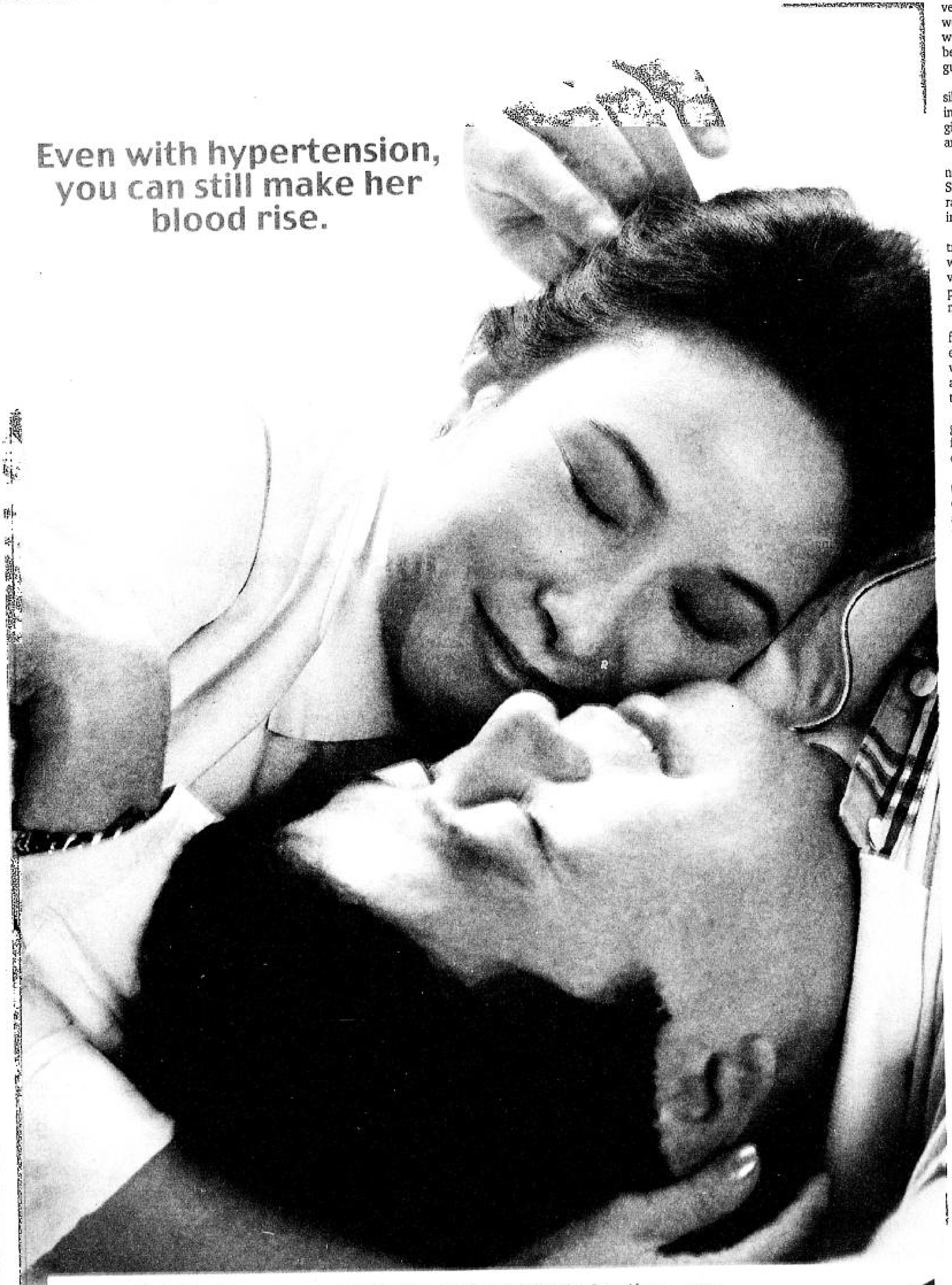
A resolution could be circulated as early as this weekend but most diplomats believe next week is more likely.

Diplomats said there were several different "short and simply worded" versions of the text, which would find Iraq in "material breach" of its obligations—a definition that the United States and Britain believe would be enough to justify military action.

Still, many council members were voicing support for continued inspections in the absence of irrefutable evidence that Iraq retains weapons of mass destruction. Germany and Russia are backing a French proposal to counter the US push for military action.

Powell told the International Relations Committee of the US Congress on Wednesday that he intends to ask France and Germany whether they are opposing war with Iraq in order to get Saddam "off the hook."

Nato, facing one of its gravest crises in its 54-year history, called off a meeting of ambassadors after it became clear they were no nearer to agreeing whether the alliance should help Turkey, Iraq's neighbor, with war preparations. *Reuters, AP, AFP*



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SPORTS

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German football coach leaves Iraq

BAGHDAD—German coach Bernd Stange is leaving Iraq and his job as national football coach after just three months because of the fears of looming war, the German foreign ministry confirmed on Thursday. Earlier this month, Germany warned all its citizens in Iraq to leave the country. AFP

FIRST GENTLEMAN CIRCUIT

Sinfuego nips Casas by 1 at Orchard

SINFUEGO: The win came as a big surprise. PDI PHOTO

By Jong Arcano

ADD Richard Sinfuego to the growing list of players who have foiled Cassius Casas' title bid in the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit.

Sinfuego rallied from six shots down yesterday with a four-under-par 68 to score a one-stroke victory in the 11th leg at the Orchard's Palmer in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Casas faltered with bogeys on 15 and 16 to lose the title a fourth time in five legs.

The 36-year-old Sinfuego ignited his rally with birdies on the first three holes. He was already at the clubhouse and not expecting much when he got wind of Casas' collapse.

Sinfuego's last-hole birdie proved to be the clincher as he finished with a 72=288 against the 75=289 of Casas, who placed first once and second four times the past five weeks.

Rodrigo Cuello, finishing tied for third with rookie pro Angelo Que at 290, committed a late boo-boo that derailed his bid for a first title in the nationwide circuit bankrolled by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's foundation and San Miguel Beer with WG&A Super Ferry as the official carrier.

Cuello, the Mizuno pro like two-leg winner Mars Pucay, shot a 74 but only after he drove out-of-bounds on the17th.

Que joined Sinfuego as the only sub-par scorers for the day with his 70, giving the former amateur star his best finish since scoring his breakthrough win in Bacolod late last year.

"Hindi ko na inasahang manalo, medyo malayo na kasi (The win came as a big surprise since I felt the margin was just too big to overcome)," said Sinfuego.

The P100,000 paycheck installed Sinfuego, adding a second win to his victory in Canlubang, as the new Order of Merit leader. He replaced Pucay who could only finish 13th.

After hitting the turn at 32 with his fourth birdie for the day on the sixth, Sinfuego seemed on the brink of collapse as he made a couple of three-putt bogey errors on 11 and 12 then sliced into the water on the tough 13th.

The circuit moves to the Manila Southwoods for the final leg next week.

The scores:

288 - R. Sinfuego 71-75-74-68
289 - C. Casas 68-72-74-75
290- R. Cuello 71-71-74-74, A. Que 72-76-72-70
292 - E. Bagtas 72-72-76-72, R. Pactolerin 73-71-74-74
293 - D. Zarate 71-74-75-73, R. Pagunsan 76-67-75-75
295 - T. Yoshinaga (Jpn) 72-72-75-76
296 - C. LaO 70-75-74-77
298 - E. Estrera 77-66-79-76
299 - R. Brobio 74-72-75-78

Woods 1-under after fog halted Buick play

SAN DIEGO, California—Tiger Woods made an abbreviated return to the PGA Tour Thursday, playing the first nine holes in one-under 35 as rain and fog disrupted the first round of the $4.5 million Buick Invitational.

The world's top golfer is hoping for a strong showing to get back into the competitive swing after a knee operation forced him to miss the first five tournaments of the season.

But an obviously frustrated Woods looked rusty in coming off the longest layoff of his professional career.

On a day when the weather prevented anyone from finishing the round, Woods' day ended with a drive on 10th tee that he shanked to the right, only to have the horn sound seconds later to signal the end of play for the day.

Because Woods had already hit his ball, he had to walk out into the thick mist to find it and mark it for the beginning of play on Friday.

Had Woods waited 10 seconds or if either of his playing partners, Canadian Ian Leggatt and Phil Tataurangi of New Zealand, had teed off first, he could have started the hole on Friday. *AFP*

Els increases lead

PERTH, Australia--Ernie Els carded a seven-under 65 and padded his lead to four shots halfway through the $1.68M Johnnie Walker Classic.

Els fired an eight-under 64 in the opener for a two-day total of 129.

Greg Owen and Robert Allenby shot identical 64s to place second with 133. Stephen Leaney and Jean-Francois Remesy were two strokes back after shooting identical 67s.

Augusta 'obsolete'–Nicklaus

NICKLAUS

NAPLES, Florida—Jack Nicklaus, who won the US Masters six times, says the Augusta National course is "on the way to obsolescence" because of advances in equipment.

The increased distances players have been hitting the ball this year will negate the 250 yards added to Augusta for the 2002 U.S. Masters, Nicklaus told reporters on the eve of the Champions Tour's ACE Group Classic which starts on Friday.

"Last year, with the equipment we had, I couldn't play Augusta," said Nicklaus on Thursday. "I'm not sure with the new ball that I couldn't play it.

"Augusta was ahead of the curve but I don't think they are anymore with the new equipment. Within one year, I think Augusta is on the way to obsolescence, just like every other golf course in this country, because of equipment.

"That puts it right back to where it was, in one year," he said. "Where is Augusta going to go from here?"

The lengthening of Augusta was said at the time to be a way of preserving the original playing characteristics and shot values of the course.

After only five PGA Tour events in 2003, 16 players are averaging more than 300 yards in driving distance.

In 2002, only John Daly averaged more than 300 yards. The top 75 players on this year's driving distance list all average more than 290 yards.

When asked if he intended to play at the US Masters in April, Nicklaus replied: "If I feel like I do today, probably not. The Masters is probably too difficult for me anymore." The 63-year-old American said he believed that Sweden's Annika Sorenstam could perform well in the Colonial in May. She will be the first woman in 58 years to play in a PGA Tour event.

Nicklaus said he thought her participation in the Colonial was "kind of neat." "I've always felt that I don't care what your race is or what your gender is, bring your golf clubs and go play," he said. *Reuters*

King lauds Sorenstam decision

NEW YORK — The way tennis great Billie Jean King sees it, Annika Sorenstam's decision to play in the Colonial is the perfect way to celebrate an anniversary.

On Sept. 20, 1973, King beat Bobby Riggs in the "Battle of the Sexes," bringing more exposure to women's sports.

Now comes Sorenstam. The world's best female golfer will become the first woman in 58 years to compete on the PGA Tour when she plays at the Colonial in Fort Worth, Texas, in May.

"I think this is pretty fitting that Annika is going out and playing in the tournament," King said Thursday. "It's kind of like an anniversary in some ways. ... I think she's going to do just fine."

Sorenstam won 13 times around the world last year, shattered the tour's scoring record and finished out of the top 10 only three times. The previous year, she became the first woman to shoot a 59 and earn more than $2 million in one season.

She said she agreed to play in the Colonial because she's curious to see how she will perform against men.

"I think it's great that she chose to do this," said King, who won 12 Grand Slam singles titles. "The world is going to appreciate her a lot more. I think deep down she thinks she hasn't gotten the media coverage she deserves, and I think that this is finally a way the media can pay attention to her accomplishments.

"For the LPGA and women's sports, I hope she's embracing that thought in how to elevate recognition for women's sports."

The last woman to play on the PGA Tour was Babe Zaharias, who qualified for the 1945 Los Angeles Open and made the 36-hole cut before she was eliminated in the third round with a 79. *AP*

Chairman's Cup starts March 7

By Dennis U. Eroa

PAYUMO

SOME 140 Freeport investors will see action in the 5th SBMA Chairman's Cup, an annual golf tournament being held for the benefit of poor but deserving college students. The event is slated March 7-8 at the Subic Bay Golf and Country Club.

Dubbed as "Golf for a Cause," the fund-raising tournament spearheaded by SBMA chair Felicito C. Payumo will not only feature executives of Freeport companies but also those working in other special economic zones.

"This early, I would like to thank the participants and sponsors of this worthy event. Education is very important in nation-building," said Payumo.

Students from the Aeta community within the Freeport, caddies and poor students in Olongapo City, Zambales and Bataan will benefit from this tournament.

The scholars are presently studying in various colleges namely Columban College, Aura and UP-Diliman.

There will be team and individual competitions. Entries will be limited to 30 teams and registration will be on a first come, first served basis. Those interested may call Portia Zabala of the SBMA Tourism Department at 047-252-4242/4123.

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Investor wants parallel coverage of PBA

By June Navarro

EVEN IF NBN-4 secures all the requirements for the signing of a franchise agreement with the PBA, the government station must stick to a parallel broadcast with IBC-13 on the airing of the games.

Otherwise, NBN-4 stands to lose its chief financial backer, Summit Sports World Corporation, the investor which guaranteed the issuance of a P200-million letter of credit from Manila Bank, a source yesterday told the INQUIRER.

A parallel broadcast between NBN and IBC is one of the main requirements that encouraged Summit Sports to agree and back up NBN-4 on its financial obligations with Manila Bank.

Parallel broadcast aims to capture a market which caters to the upper classes of society and the age bracket 13-19 on one side and a viewership that entertains people from all walks of life.

Under the proposal, IBC will be tasked to entice the high-end market while NBN will focus on a traditional coverage similar to what Vintage and Viva Sports had done in the past.

NBN chair Mia Concio said a parallel broadcast might not materialize during the opening of the 2003 PBA season on Feb. 23 but would definitely hit the boob tube in the mid-season at the latest.

"We don't want to rush. We want to make sure everything's in place. I guess the Invitationals in July will be the perfect time for parallel," said Concio.

NBN general manager Joey Isabelo shared Concio's sentiments and stressed that the scheme should be done gradually until such a time that it fits the marketing strategies of the consortium.

"It's all about timing. We want to first see the response of the sponsors on the PBA before we could embark on a parallel broadcast," said Isabelo.

CABALAN

But by hook or by crook, sources said NBN should come up with a parallel broadcast so as not to lose its commitment from Summit Sports headed by a certain Felix Co.

Concio said NBN had already obtained a favorable opinion from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel regarding NBN's transaction with Summit Sports, a move that will finally seal the signing of the franchise deal next week.

On the PBA's end, PBA chair Jun Cabalan sees no further hitches on the agreement as he reiterated his support for a parallel broadcast.

SMC tryouts slated at Meralco Gym Feb. 17-18

TRYOUTS for the teams that San Miguel Corporation (SMC) is organizing for its basketball promotions in the countryside will be held on Feb. 17-18, 1 p.m., at the Meralco Gym along Ortigas Ave., Pasig City.

Eric Altamirano, the project director, said yesterday that former PBA stars like Hector Calma, Samboy Lim and Noli Locsin have expressed interest in joining the program.

Basketball clinics, exhibition matches and coaching techniques will be held around the country.

The project will involve two teams composed of retired players–one for Luzon and the other for the Visayas and Mindanao.

For other details, call the SMC Corporate Marketing at 632-2888.

SportsTV

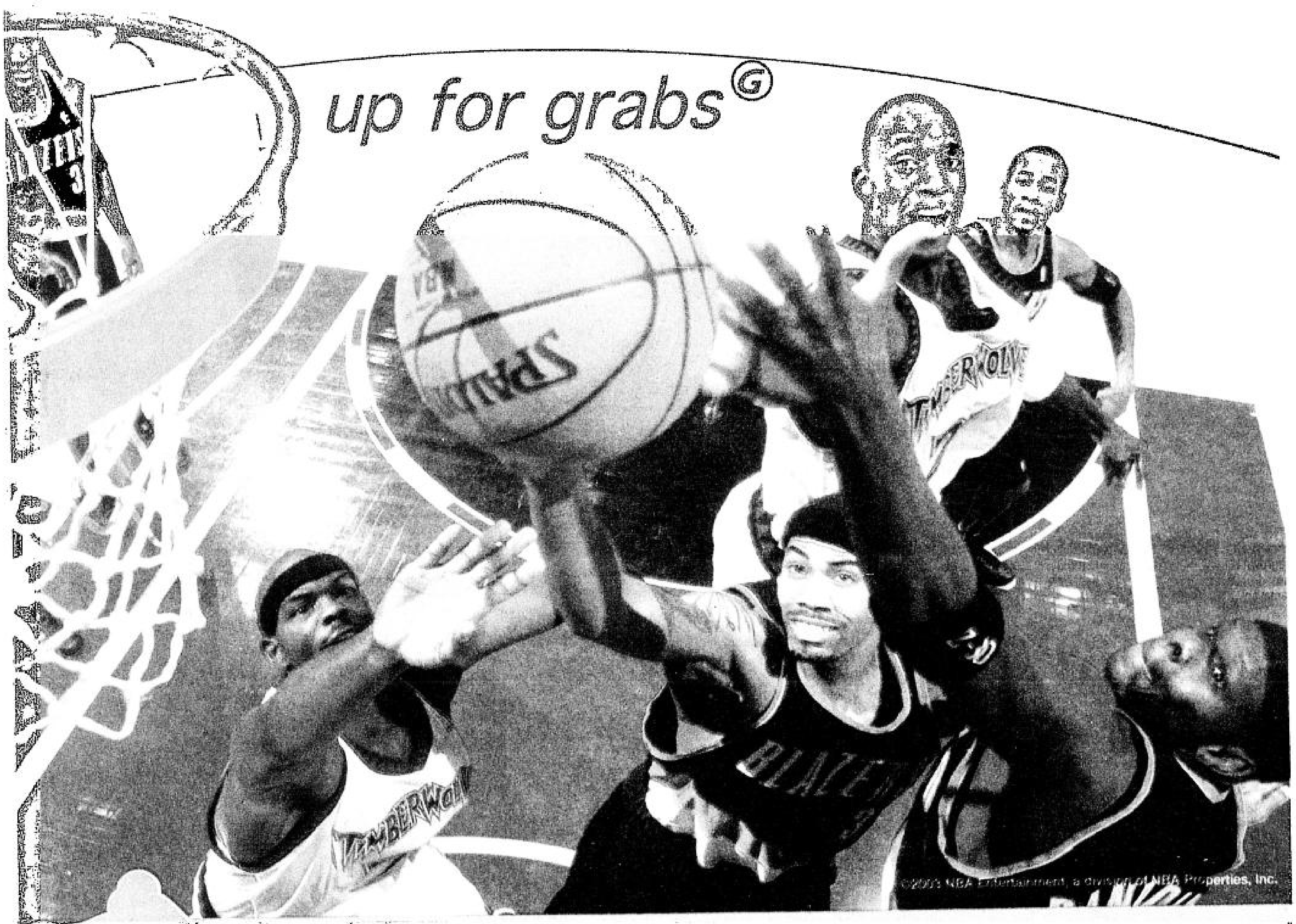
Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

GOLF: Buick Invitational, 10:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. (r), Star Sports

The Golf Club 2003, 1 p.m. (r), Star Sports

BASKETBALL: NBA - Magic vs 76ers, 9 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), ESPN, Greatest Games - Lakers vs Spurs, Game 4, 2002 W. Conference Finals, 9:30 a.m. (r - 11 p.m.), Solar Sports, Lakers vs Spurs, 11:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports

NBA Inside Stuff, 3:30 p.m. (r), Star Sports



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La Salle XI cops national under-16 title

DUMAGUETE CITY—La Salle Academy of Iligan downed NCR champion Ateneo de Manila via penalty shootout, 5-3, to bag the 19th Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 national football crown Thursday at the Silliman ballfield here.

After a 1-1 standoff in the regulation and extra period, the La Sallites outscored the Metro Manilans, 4-2, in the shootout to give Mindanao its first ever title in 19 years of the nationwide youth soccerfest sponsored by Coca-Cola.

Reginald Jukes, Felip Lagrosas, Jay Britner Actub and Michael Atienza converted their respective penalty kicks to help La Salle Iligan clinch the crown after 14 national final appearances.

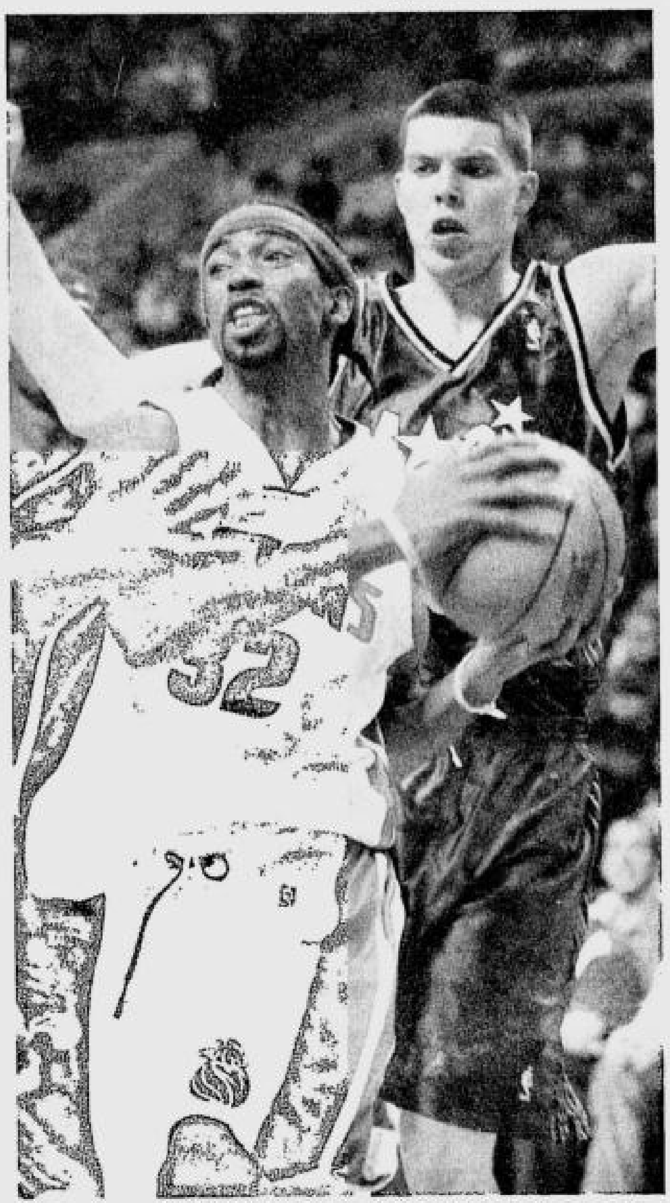
Vinchi Gambo and Regino Vergel de Dios produced Ateneo's two goals in the shootout.

It was also Jukes who gave La Salle a 1-0 lead in the 55th minute of regulation play, but Eliezer Fabroada tied the count 10 minutes later.

Iligan's Michael Atienza was named the tourney's most valuable player. The other individual awardees were Iligan's Felip Lagrosa, best midfielder, and Abraham Lacaya, best goalkeeper; Cebu Don Bosco's Jason Cordova, best defender; and Masbate's Mark Anthony Marcaida, highest scorer with nine goals.

Lakers-Spurs on Solar

TWO of the NBA's powerhouse teams, the Los Angeles Lakers and the San Antonio Spurs, collide today "live" at 11:30 a.m. on Solar Sports, with a replay at 8 p.m. While the game features two former NBA MVPs in LA's Shaquille O'Neal and Tim Duncan of the Spurs, the player to most likely to take over the game will be Kobe Bryant. Over his last seven games, all Lakers victories, Bryant has averaged 42 points on 51.3 percent shooting while doing his customary work on defense.



DETROIT Pistons' Richard Hamilton (32) puts up a shot in front of Orlando Magic's Mike Miller during their NBA game yesterday. The Piston's won, 98-88. The Boston Celtics beat the Portland Trailblazers, 100-92, in the other game. AFP

Pistons extend win streak to 6

DETROIT—Richard Hamilton scored 29 points to lead the red-hot Detroit Pistons to their sixth successive victory, downing Tracy McGrady and the Orlando Magic 98-88 Thursday.

The Pistons matched a season high with the streak, and also made it eight wins in nine games, as they overcame a tremendous performance by McGrady, the league's leading scorer.

McGrady had 35 points, 11 rebounds and six assists but it was not enough to stop the Magic losing for the sixth time in eight games. He was chosen earlier in the day to play on the 2004 US Olympic basketball team.

Cliff Robinson added 18 points for the Pistons while Chauncey Billups had 12 and Michael Curry tied a season-high with 11 points. NBA rebound leader Ben Wallace pulled down 18 boards.

Detroit (34-15) pulled within a game of Indiana for the best record in the Central Division and Eastern Conference.

Jacque Vaughn had 15 points for the Magic while Pat Garrity chipped in with 14 and Andrew DeClercq 11.

Orlando was without Shawn Kemp for the second consecutive game. He is suspended for violating the terms of the NBA's anti-drug policy.

McGrady leads US '5'

NEW YORK—Ray Allen, Tim Duncan, Jason Kidd and Tracy McGrady were the first four players chosen Thursday for the 2004 U.S. Olympic men's basketball team, with Kobe Bryant conspicuously absent—for now. The long-awaited announcement was made in Colorado Springs, Colorado, by USA Basketball, which said Bryant could be added to the team at a later date once a contractual issue is cleared up. Bryant is "very interested" in playing on the team, the national team organizing committee said. The committee added that he has been asked to play on the team but has yet to sign the organization's standard player contract. AP

Bataan heads MCA league bets

TEAM Bataan of Gov. Leonardo Ding Roman will defend its title in the Metropolitan Chess Association (MCA) Amateur League first quarter which is set to kick off at 9 a.m. on Feb. 22-23 at the Lotus Garden Hotel in Malate, Manila.

Truman Hernaez and Ricardo Briones are the newest members with Allan Macala the only carryover of last year's champion team.

Expected to give Team Bataan stiff competition are runner-up Team Marikina A of Councilor Boy Santos, CMI Realty Corp., CDO-Mindanao, DAR, Dasmariñas of Mayor Elpidio Barzaga Jr., Mandaluyong, Team Marikina B of Engr. Malabiga and PCSO.

Other teams expected to do well are RCBC, PS, PNOC, Aspire-IT, PNP, Bol-Anon, DTI, SSS, BPI, CBCEA, ITP Construction, JMA, Cabuyao Chess Circle, Sulong Laguna, Bagong Silang, Olongapo G4, PAIRCARGO, Tabilog Cargo Services, PAGS, MWSI, Dumalag Corp., UST, DLSU, UP, MLQU, TIP, Sta. Ana Youth Rising Council, Bgy. West Crame, cities and provinces of Quezon City, Kalookan, Paranaque, Las Pinas, Valenzuela, Meycauayan, Malabon, Lipa, Iriga, Ilocos Sur, Benguet and Bicol.

For details, call 826-8560, 0916-852-1069 and 0918-939-3702.

RP archer hits gold in Bangkok

BANGKOK—A young archer who has been competing for only seven months–Janina Bianco Ortiz–did the country proud yesterday by bagging the gold medal in the 70-meter women's individual compound event in the first leg of the Asian Grand Prix here.

The 20-year-old, 5-foot-3 Ortiz, who made her debut in local competitions only last July, carded 625 points on rounds of 319 and 266 to beat Singapore's Tan Bee Wah (618) and Leong Yoka Sim (591).

Another compound bet, PSA awardee Raul Ramon Arambulo, took the silver medal in the men's division while Sydney Olympic Games veteran Jennifer Chan pocketed the bronze in the women's 70-meter recurve event.

Arambulo scored 659 (325-334) and actually finished in a ties with Singapore's Eugene Kwong Kok Song, but he lost via tiebreak. Another Singaporean, Vision Heng Fook Hup got the bronze with 654.

Chan tallied 627 to finish behind Malaysia's Mon Rider Sui Ni and Japan's Kawasaki, Yukasi, who scored identical 636 points.

Asian Gamers Marvin Cordero, Christian Cubilla and Arnold Rojas posted 633, 598 and 598 to rank ninth, 23rd and 24th, respectively, in the men's recurve event.

Another Asian Gamer Rachelle Anne Cabral, finished seventh in the women's and 557 to place 17th and 19th in the men's compound division.

SPORTSWATCH

Realtors homegrown

"Proud to be homegrown," will be Sta. Lucia Realty's battlecry as it competes in the PBA All-Filipino Cup slated on Feb. 23 at the Araneta Coliseum. "We are not setting a racial tone, but let me say that Sta. Lucia is fielding a team composed of homegrown talents," said team manager Buddy Encarnado yesterday at the revival of the SCOOP sa Kamayan at West Avenue in Quezon City. Encarnado said that Sta. Lucia hopes to prove something by fielding a lineup sans Fil-Ams. "We coulld have easily opted for the Proud to be Filipino slogan, but we chose the "homegrown" to dismiss the notion that we are anti-Fil-Am.

Talk N' Text wins anew

TALK N' Text-National Youth Pool A came off with another sizzling start Thursday, repulsing Ginebra-NCRAA, 102-77, to grab the solo lead in the first Bert Lina Cup-Six Feet and Above Junior Basketball Cup at the San Sebastian College gym. Philippine College of Criminology discovery Edwin Asoro led Talk N' Text's fast and furious scoring run in the second period, coming off with 11 of 17 points which gave the Johnny Tam-coached quintet its third straight win against Ginebra-NCRAA. Jonathan Fernandez led Talk N' Text with 21 points, three rebounds, four assists and four steals.

Agassi beats Philippoussis

SAN JOSE, California—America's Andre Agassi lost just four points on his serve, and won five service games at love to defeat Australia's Mark Philippoussis 6-4, 6-1 in the second round of the Siebel Open on Thursday. The top-seeded Agassi, a four-time champion in this event, improved to 9-0 this year and 5-1 in his career against Philippoussis.

Williams versus Pisnik

ANTWERP, Belgium — Fourth seed Daniela Hantuchova rallied from a set down to beat Belgian Els Callens 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 and reach the quarterfinals of the $585,000 Diamond Games on Thursday. Slovene Tina Pisnik also came from behind to beat Virginie Razzano 4-6, 6-3, 6-0 in the second round, setting up an encounter with top-seeded Venus Williams. AP

Rains delay RP-China

WUHAN, China—The Philippines and host China will have to wait another day for the start of their Asia-Oceania zone Group II Davis Cup first round tie here.Rains Thursday night rendered the Wuhan Tennis Center outdoor courts unplayable, forcing the organizers to postpone the matches for today.

Nat'l karate lures 400

FOUR hundred individual karatekas nationwide representing fifty two karate clubs have already confirmed their participation in the 16th National Open Karate Championships slated February 22-23 at the Cebu Coliseum in Cebu City.

Organized by the Philippine Karatedo Federation headed by Eduardo Ponce, the number surpasses the two hundred fifty-eight entries that took part in last year's tournament in Baguio City. Participants from other areas in Luzon and Mindanao as of presstime, are still being awarded.

"On record, this will make the Cebu National Championships the biggest ever since the inception of the event in 1987," Ponce exhilirated by the development said.

All national athletes, except 2001 SEA Games gold and silver medal winners Gretchen Malalad and Junel Perania, Busan Asiad bronze winner Cherli Tugday and last year's national open gold and silver medalists, are required to re-qualify their membership in the tournament.

Benilde sweeps 'volley'

COLLEGE of St. Benilde defeated Jose Rizal University, 21-16, 21-13, last Sunday to sweep the elimination round of the first National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men's beach volleyball tournament at the La Salle-Greenhills beach courts.

San Sebastian College placed second with a 6-1 record after posting a 21-19, 21-9 victory over University of Perpetual Help-Rizal.

Mapua rallied past San Beda College, 19-21, 21-19, 15-11, to finish with a 5-2 card while San Beda College was fourth with a 4-3 mark followed by UPHR (3-4), JRU (2-5), PCU (1-6) and Letran (0-7).

In the women's division, San Sebastian needed only 22 minutes to prevail over Mapua, 21-5, 21-10, for its fifth straight win in this event supported by San Miguel Corporation, Speedo, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes and Nestea.

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO
BY MR. 999

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Race 2--1. Star Material 2. Stout Hearted 3. Golden Snake Hotdog 4. Ruby's Folly
Race 3--1. Wing Commander 2. King Size 3. My Aday
Race 4--1. Gigi's Gold 2. Stop Talking 3. Noah's Ark 4. Graceful Ann
Race 5--1. Lord Of All/Midnight Rose 2. Hyperbid 3. Cat's Bells
Race 6--1. Morning After 2. Dedicated 3. Sky Wind
Race 7--1. Storm Princess 2. Wan Star 3. Lady Darinda
Race 8--1. Heavy Metal 2. Night Flight/Tribeca 3. Sir Olizon
Race 9--1. Maple My Love 2. Charming Belle 3. Diligence
Race 10--1. Sovereign Dancer 2. Exclamation Point 3. Saguitarius
Race 11--1. May's Magic 2. Santa Fe 3. Tanging Ikaw
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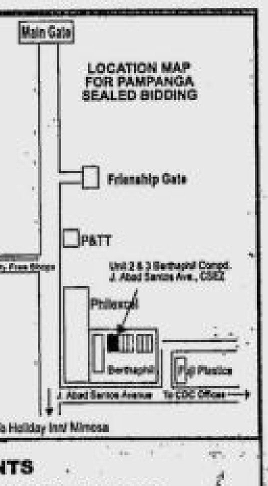

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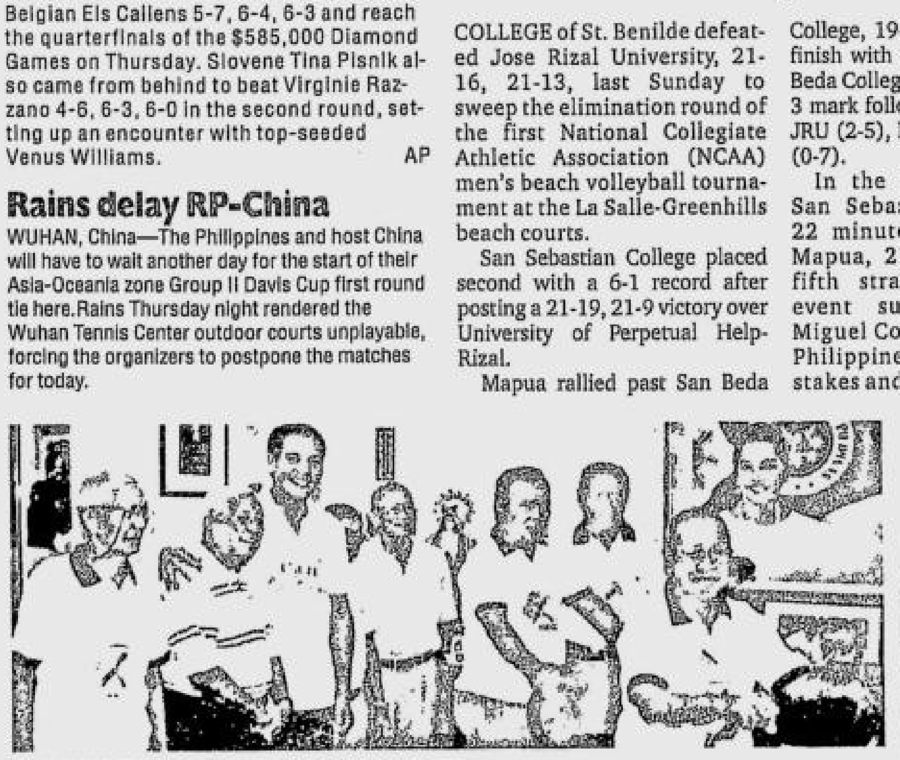

FITNESS EQUIPMENT DONATION
Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez (third from left) donates fitness equipment to Taga sa Panahon, an association of elderly people in barangay San Dionisio led by Conrado Avila. The donation consisted of a stationary bike, treadmill and 4-and-6-lb dumbells.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1993, Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla fired 1122 points to rule the standard pistol event of the shooting eliminations at the Marina range in Ft. Bonifacio. Also today in 1989, PUP bagged nine golds to win the general championship of the 3rd District Academic and Athletic Competition in Gumaca, Quezon.

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METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

Panlilio son held for estafa

THE SON of prominent jeweler Fe Panlilo was arrested by Quezon City police yesterday for an estafa case worth P6 million. The Central Police District Intelligence Unit identified the suspect as Jose Mari Panlilio, 49. The case stemmed from a complaint filed by Gener Elvina who claimed that Panlilio owed him P6 million.

Alcuin Papa

Strunk charged

By Michael Lim Ubac

ON THE strength of the handwritten confession of Philip Medel Jr., the justice department formally indicted yesterday Roger Lawrence Strunk as the brains behind the gruesome murder of multi-awarded actress Nida Blanca in 2001.

After more than six months of preliminary investigation, a two-man panel of the Department of Justice had established that Strunk indeed ordered Medel to kill Blanca.

NIDA BLANCA

Strunk and Medel, along with a Jane Doe, were charged with murder with the Pasig City regional trial court yesterday afternoon.

"Summing the evidence, it shows that more likely than not, a crime has been committed and was committed by the respondents," the panel said.

"This is the quantum of evidence that probable cause demands meaning more than "bare suspicion" but "less than evidence which would justify conviction," the panel stressed.

All other respondents, including the three security guards at the Atlanta building, were exonerated for want of evidence.

The panel recommended that the charge of murder against Vicente N. Polinar, who allegedly conducted surveillance operations on Blanca, as well as the charge for violation of presidential Decree 1829 (obstruction of justice) against security guards Ricky T. Alvarez, Roberto S. Canete and Diolito E. Molines be dismissed for insufficiency of evidence.

The filing of the murder complaint was announced by Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong during a press conference yesterday morning.

Datumanong was with the two panel members–Senior State Prosecutor Archimedes V. Manabat and State Prosecutor Mark E. Jalandoni–and Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno, who approved the panel's recommedation to file the complaint for murder.

The panel said that extradition proceedings against Strunk, who is in the United States, would begin once the trial court issued the arrest warrant.

Datumanong, who assumed his post only last month, did not say much during the press conference because he was unfamiliar with the Blanca case.

Moreover, Datumanong would be called upon to review the panel's resolution should Strunk lawyers from the Siguion-Reyna law offices and Medel's counsel Salvador Panel decide to appeal the ruling in 15 days.

Zuno declared the Blanca case "closed" with respect to the DOJ investigation.

He believed that the DOJ had an airtight case against Strunk and Medel.

But despite the finding of a probable cause against Strunk and Medel, the motive for the killing remains a mystery to this day.

The panel failed to establish the motive of Strunk in ordering the killing of his wife for 22 years.

Zuno said it was unnecessary for the panel to do so at this point because it had already established the complicity of Medel and Strunk.

Uncovering the motive of the killing that shocked the entire nation would be established during trial, said Zuno.

The National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police claimed that Strunk had all the motive in wanting Blanca dead.

"He was very much interested in the inheritance which Blanca would leave (to (Katherine Torres, Blanca's only child)," the NBI said.

Witness Elena Dela Paz testified to the panel that Blanca admitted to to her sometime in 2001 that Strunk "was intent on getting back at her after she failed to include him in the title of the house she bought in the United States."

Blanca's body was found at about 7:30 a.m. on Nov. 7, 2001 inside her car parked on the 6th floor of Atlanta Center Building on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan.

Autopsy showed that her death was caused by massive loss of blood arising fromn several stab wounds in different parts of her body some of which penetrated her major blood vessels.

ROD STRUNK

Extradition comes next

By Philip C. Tubeza

EXTRADITION proceedings against Nida Blanca murder suspect Rod Strunk will start in less than a week's time, the National Bureau of Investigation announced yesterday.

"We expect the court to issue an arrest warrant in less than a week's time after the case is filed," said Regional Director Edmund Arugay, NBI-National Capital Region unit chief.

Arugay said the NBI feels vindicated after the Department of Justice decided to file the case against Strunk and the others after its preliminary investigation.

NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said the case would be filed before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

He added that, under the new rules on criminal proceedings, the court can still review the DOJ findings and it can order a re-investigation.

But Diaz said they are confident that the court would side with the DOJ and then issue an arrest warrant against Strunk. He said the review usually takes a week's time.

"We will be initiating the extradition of Rod Strunk when the court issues the warrant. We expect that in a week's time after the case is filed," Diaz said.

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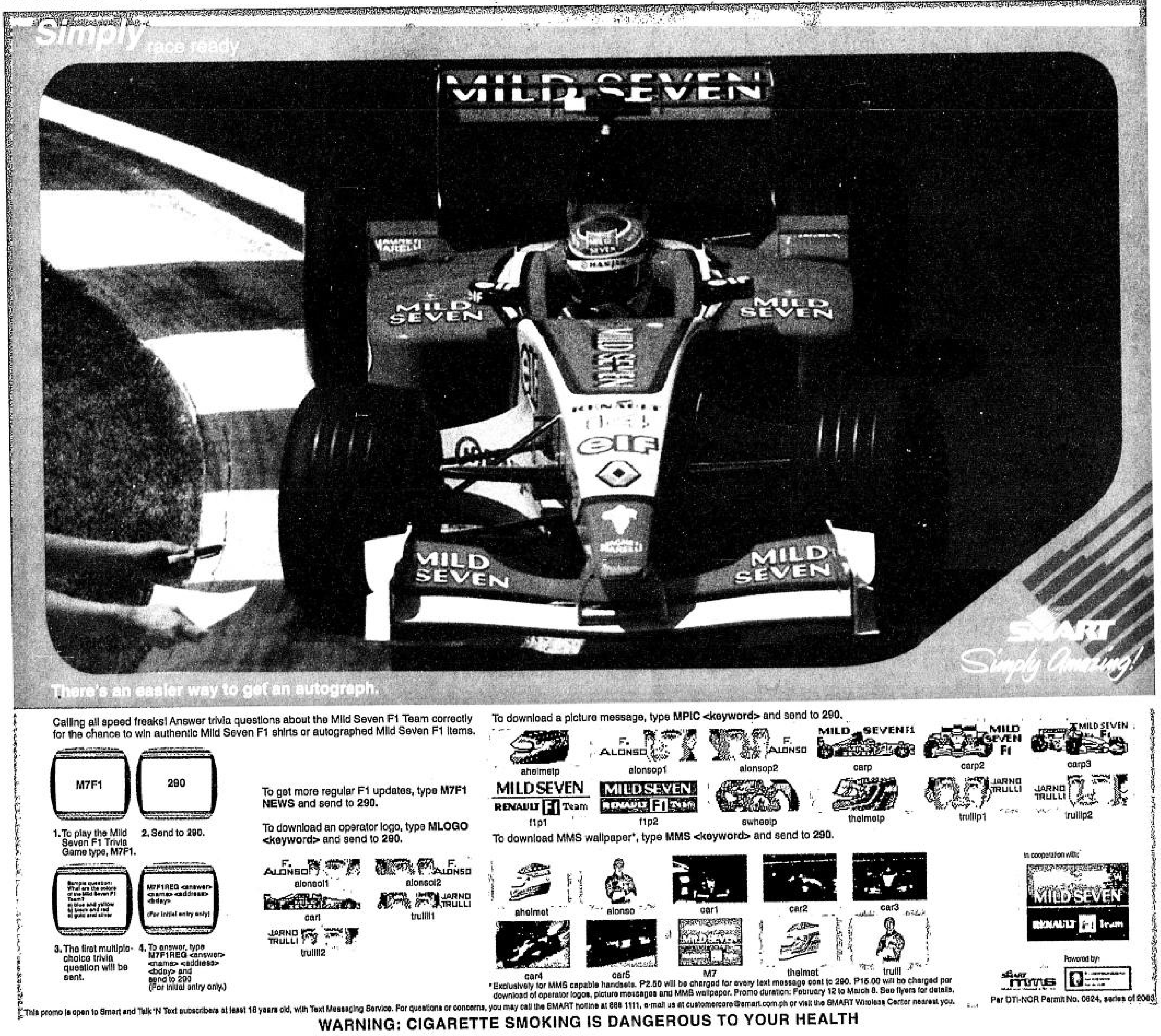

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SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 THE EYE
2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3 MAGNIFICO
4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
5 SUKDULAN
6 THEY
7 HERO
8 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1 I SPY
2 HERO
3 THE EYE
4 THEY
5 BETTER THAN SEX
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7 MAGNIFICO
8 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
9 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
10 SUKDULAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 RING (JAPANESE)
4 HOT CHICK
5 FEMME FATALE
6 BALAT SIBUYAS
7 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
8 I SPY

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
2 CLOSED
3 I SPY
4 8 MILE
5 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6 ONE HOUR PHOTO
7 CLOSED
8 TRY SEVENTEEN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3 I SPY
4 MAGNIFICO
5 THEY
6 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294875

1 HERO
2 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3 MAGNIFICO
4 AB NORMAL COLLEGE

SM CITY DAVAO
2978988

1 I SPY
2 ONE HOUR PHOTO
3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5 REPLI-KATE
6 THEY

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
3 MAGNIFICO
4 SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
850-2884

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2 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
3 AB NORMAL COLLEGE
4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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5 AB NORMAL
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2 WHITE OLANDER
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5 HERO
6 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
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6 AB NORMAL
7 I SPY
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4 AB NORMAL

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6 MAGNIFICO

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2 MAGNIFICO
3 BALATSIBUYAS
4 THEY
5 AB NORMAL

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2 HOT CHICK
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 THEY
5 LORD OF THE RINGS
6 SUKDULAN

Iloilo
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2 AB NORMAL
3 8 MILE
4 TRY SEVENTEEN
5 ONE HOUR PHOTO
6 LORD OF THE RINGS 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

POLICE THEORY

Sharp-moving robbers could be military men

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE HEAVILY armed men who robbed a Parañaque bank on Wednesday could be former cops or military officers, police said yesterday.

"It's very possible, especially with the sharp way they executed the plan and how they used their firearms," said Supt. Rolando Estilles, Parañaque police chief.

The group, composed of at least eight robbers, used high-powered firearms such as M-14 and M-16 rifles, .45-caliber pistols and grenades when they stormed Prudential Bank on Sucat, Estilles said.

Initial investigation showed that the robbers were linked to major bank robbery groups operating in Metro Manila, he added.

The three-minute heist was derailed only when two members of the Special Weapons and Tactics chanced upon the robbers and engaged them in a brief firefight.

Estilles said he and his men were closing in on suspect Marco Lanada who was identified as among those who had disarmed Prudential's security guards and scooped nearly P1 million in cash from the bank's vault.

"We know where he is," the officer said. "It's just a matter of time before we could arrest him."

Police stormed Lanada's house in Talon, Las Piñas Wednesday afternoon following a tip from the 23-year-old suspect's former employer.

Jimeno Buenaventura told investigators that Lanada had stolen his Toyota Lite Ace van early Wednesday morning.

The van was later used as one of the group's two getaway vehicles.

Sketches of the suspects have already been released by authorities.

It's Love times 900

By Tina Santos

IT WAS truly a day of love in Caloocan City as some 900 couples tied the knot during a local government-sponsored mass wedding yesterday, Valentine's Day.

With the sweet Valentine's breeze, the couples exchanged "I dos" officiated by city mayor Rey Malonzo at a special wedding site on 10th Avenue.

The affair was among the highlights of the two-week celebration of the city's 41st founding anniversary, which falls on Sunday.

Couple Michael, 28, and France Quinto, 35, of Dagat-dagatan, Caloocan, who have been living together for five years, were among those whose union has been legitimized.

"This is indeed a very memorable event for both of us, especially that it happened on the day of hearts. We're grateful that we became part of this joyous occasion," France said in Filipino.

"We tied the knot also for our children, I want them to carry my surname," Michael added.

Malonzo said children of the newly legitimized couples will now enjoy the full protection of the law.

And for those unlucky ones who failed to take advantage of yesterday's affair, the city will hold another mass wedding on Sunday, Caloocan foundation day.

7 stab wounds on Valentine's

A DISH washer, who took a red tricycle, ended up having a tragic date on Valentine's Day after he was stabbed dead by two holdup men in Quezon City yesterday.

The Central Police District Criminal Investigation Unit identified the victim as Jose Quijano Jr., 22, of 201 Road 2, Barangay Pag-asa, Quezon City. Quijano died of multiple stab wounds in different parts of his body.

Investigation revealed that the incident occurred at around 3 a.m. at the corner of Road 2 and Road 9.

The victim was on board a red tricycle when he was held up by the still unidentified driver and the vehicle's back rider.

Witnesses told police that the victim refused to turn over his cash and valuables and fought back.

The two suspects stabbed the victim repeatedly and left him by the roadside.

Police investigators said the victim bore a total of seven stab wounds. *Alcuin Papa*

He needs help

UNLESS 7-month-old Elijie Matthew Pacheco is operated on soon, doctors fear complications will set in and claim his young life. Elijie Matthew is suffering from hydrocephalus—head bloated from the accumulation of fluids in his cranium.

He also cannot see.

Doctors in Bacolod who have examined him are recommending immediate operation. Aside from grave complications, doctors fear his head might burst from continued bloating.

His mother, Lorelyn Pacheco, has sought the help of the nuns at Casa de la Providencia in Pontevedra, Negros Occidental for the operation estimated to cost at least P50,000. The nuns are appealing for help to raise the amount.

Both his parents have no regular income.

Casa de la Providencia, a newly established mission by the Franciscan Sisters of St. Anthony, runs a program for poor and disadvantaged children.

Any assistance for Pacheco can be coursed through Sr. Dominga Lopez of the CdlP, tel. no. 034-333725 or mail to CdlP, Barangay Reoreo, Pontevedra, Negros Occidental.

A COUPLE spending special sweetness with each other with the romantic view of the Laguna Lake before them during Valentine's Day.

ERIK ARAZAS

Daughter bares suffering and unimaginable agony

By Tina Santos

ALL she ever wanted was to free her family from poverty, then send her siblings to school.

All these were shattered because, bared the 19-year-old victim, she experienced hell in the hands of her own family.

For the last five years, Eve (not her real name), claimed she was sexually abused by her stepfather.

And just when she thought she could turn to her own family for comfort, she was instead chained like a dog, whipped, kept in a pig pen and even fed with soap by her own mother and elder brother.

In an interview, the victim, who had shown signs of mental illness, the result of years of abuse, said she still loves her family but she would not dare return home for fear of being brutalized again.

"Mahal ko naman ang mama ko pero galit siya sa akin. Baka ikadena na naman niya ako, ayoko na natatakot ako. Pati si kuya Elmer, *tatadyakan niya ako,"* Eve said in between sobs.

Eve said she managed to escape from their house on Capitol Amparo Street, Camarin, Caloocan sometime this month and gathered enough courage to finally reveal the abuse to barangay 177 kagawad Alicia Batan.

Raped at 13

Batan, who now stands as Eve's guardian, accompanied the victim to the police precinct to report the abuse last Wednesday.

The second of four children, Eve said her stepfather Ernesto Palacios started raping her in 1998 when she was only 13. She said she would be roused from her sleep in the dead of the night before being raped in her room.

This year, Eve said, Palacios decided to flee to Iloilo for fear she would reveal the abuses to authorities. Palacios has remained in hiding.

The victim said she had tried to tell about the sexual abuses to her mother, Lita Tagiou, but she simply kept mum and even got mad at her.

*"Balewala na nga sa akin na ni-*rape *ako ng* stepfather *ko basta mahalin lang ako ng mama ko pero sinasaktan 'nya ako,"* she said.

Victim accused

The mother had accused the victim of being mentally deranged: *"Sa tuwing magsusumbong ako, sinasabi nila na sira-ulo daw ako kaya nila ako kinakadena."*

Actually, Eve confided, her mother wanted her stepfather, the family breadwinner, back. His sudden departure, Eve said, enraged her mother who turned to punishing her.

"Gusto nya pabalikin ang asawa niya tapos kalimutan na daw ang pagabuso sa akin ng stepfather *ko,"* she said.

The victim, who said she used to do laundry chores for her neighbors, explained that she wanted to send her siblings Shenalyn, 17, and Kimkim, 15 to school.

"Gusto kong magtrabaho para kumita kasi gusto kong mapag-aral ang mga kapatid ko. Ayoko na [illegible] ang maranasan nila ang sinapit ko na grade 2 *lang ang natapos,"* she said.

Now, she's harboring an even bigger fear: she could have been impregnated by her stepfather. She said she has missed her menstrual period for the third month now.

"Yun pa ang kinakatakot ko, baka buntis ako. Hindi ko na alam ang gagawin ko talaga," she mumbled.

Anyway, she feels somehow consoled that her agony could be over now that she's under the custody of Batan.

She bore ligature marks on the neck, waist and ankles.

Is Lacson about to be arrested?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE GOVERNMENT has asked the United States to deport former police superintendents Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao for their alleged involvement in the killing of PR man Bubby Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito more than two years ago.

Aquino and Mancao were the trusted men of Sen. Panfilo Lacson when he was still the chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and concurrent head of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

All those involved in the kidnap-slaying of Dacer and Corbito were either members of the PAOCTF or from Cavite, Lacson's home province.

* * *

Aquino and Mancao allegedly masterminded the kidnap-slaying of the PR man and his driver.

Aquino, Mancao and the rest were just following orders from Lacson.

Why is Lacson not included in the criminal complaint? Life is really unfair!

* * *

If Aquino and Mancao were included as principals in that heinous crime, why was Lacson excluded?

When they hatched the plan to kidnap and then kill Dacer at the PAOCTF headquarters in Camp Crame, do you think Lacson did not know about the plan?

Nothing happened at the PAOCTF that Lacson did not know of. He even knew who farted inside the office.

* * *

Lacson is probably shaking in his shoes because of the government's request for the extradition of Aquino and Mancao.

If the two guys go to prison, they will surely implicate Lacson in the conspiracy to kill Dacer.

That is, if Aquino and Mancao ever live to tell the whole story. Look what happened to Supt. Teofilo Vina, one of those implicated in the Dacer-Corbito kidnap-slaying. Vina was killed in Cavite allegedly after he planned to spill the beans on the mastermind.

* * *

Reliable sources say that the Supreme Court has ruled that Lacson should undergo trial in the celebrated Kuratong Baleleng multiple murder case.

This means that if the decision comes out, a warrant of arrest will be issued against the former PNP chief.

Since murder is a non-bailable offense, Lacson will have to stay in jail while he's being tried along with the other accused.

* * *

What's keeping the high court from coming out with the decision?

Are the honorable justices afraid of Lacson?

Or are they waiting for something to happen?

* * *

Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco for president?

Why not?

If Lacson and Raul Roco have the temerity to aspire for the country's highest office, all the more there's reason for Danding Cojuangco to try his luck at the presidency the second time around.

What this country needs at the helm is a highly successful businessman.

Cojuangco would make an excellent chief executive because running a country is like running a big corporation. Look what happened to San Miguel Corp. after he became its chair.

* * *

Now that President Macapagal-Arroyo has unleashed the "dogs of war" against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, watch how high her popularity ratings will go.

President Erap's popularity ratings went up after he declared war on the MILF.

The silent majority thinks that the MILF deserves to be punished for the abuses it's committing against innocent civilians.

* * *

The best way to deal with recalcitrant Moros is to be firm with them.

Moros mistake kindness and gentleness for cowardice. People who fight them back earn their respect.

Moros are good at bluffing.

* * *

Administrator Arthur Yap of the National Food Authority says he's willing to face any congressional inquiry to belie allegations by Rep. Carlos Padilla (Nueva Vizcaya) that he was involved in importing rotten rice from India.

Padilla, in a privilege speech, said that Yap, Indian businessman Hemlani Kishore and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo conspired in importing Indian rice which was found unfit for human consumption.

"Mon, I'm willing to be investigated by Congress. Nothing of that sort happened. Congressman Padilla was misinformed," Yap says.

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Gael Garcia Bernal
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A Film by Carlos Carrera

The Hope of Freedom and Justice! Is Back!

Slash rates to drum up trade, Makati officials tell establishment owners

By Leila Salaverria

BUSINESS establishments in Makati, especially those that cater to tourists, have been asked to do their part and slash their rates to rev up tourism in the city.

The Makati City Council recently passed a resolution urging establishment owners to give 10 percent discount on their rates until the end of the year. This year has been declared "Visit the Philippines Year" by the World Tourism Organization.

Makati, which houses the country's premiere business district, has been tagged the urban tourism capital in the Philippines.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said the resolution is meant to recognize the important role businesses play in promoting the city a "work hard, play hard," area.

Binay said the business establishments' support is essential in order to capture local and foreign tourists' interest.

VILLANUEVA

She needs to live for her 3 kids

RAQUEL Villanueva, 28, a fish vendor and a mother of three, is fighting for dear life.

She is saddled with a debilitating illness on both of her kidneys, but her treatment is hampered by lack of funds.

In the meantime, while a donor is being sought and funds are being raised, Raquel had been sent home. She has to undergo blood transfusion to keep her strong enough and has to take a lot of medicines, which she could scarcely afford.

Her husband Frank is a fisherman and hardly makes enough to buy the costly medicine. The whole community of Talim Island, Navotas, Cardona, Rizal, where the Villanuevas live, is pitching in to aid Raquel, and they are also calling on the readers to help the young mother.

Those who wish to extend assistance to Raquel may call barangay captain Lito Reyes at 0918-5684224.

Leila Salaverria

Sorsogon High meet

THE SORSOGON High School Alumni Association Educational Foundation Inc. will hold a post-Valentine party on Feb. 16.

The party will be held at the Veterans Center, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Interested members may contact founding president Amando C. Detera at 882-0837, secretary Milagros F. Frando at 714-7281, or treasurer Nanette B. Lapuz at 534-7768.

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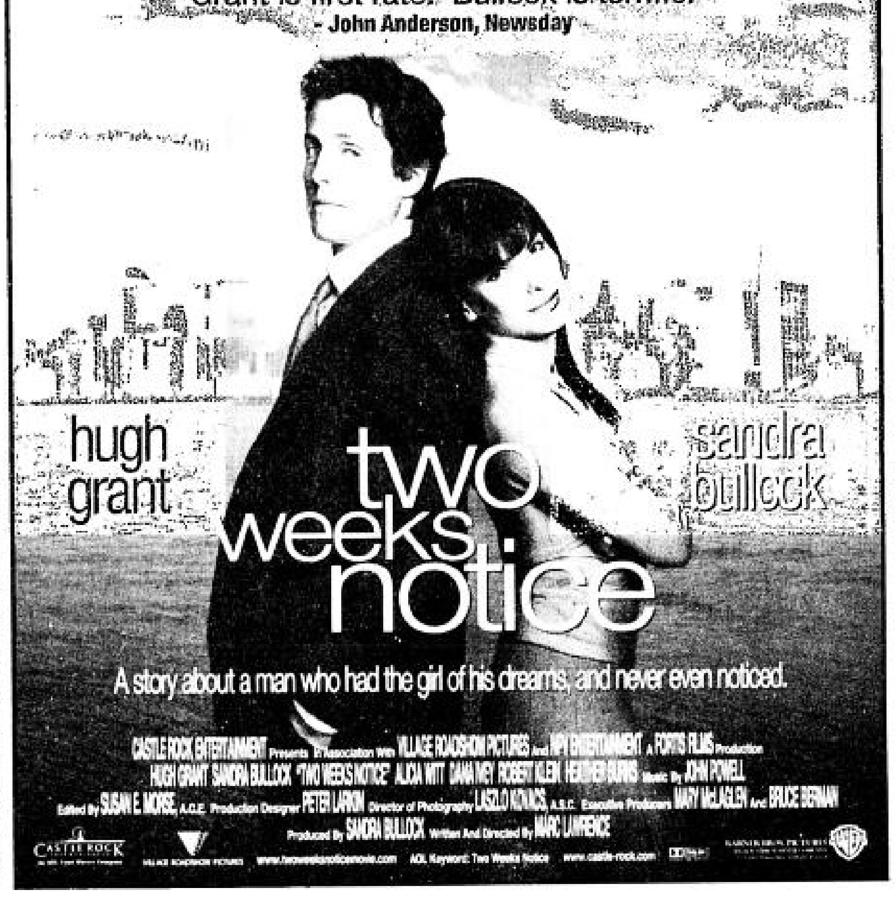

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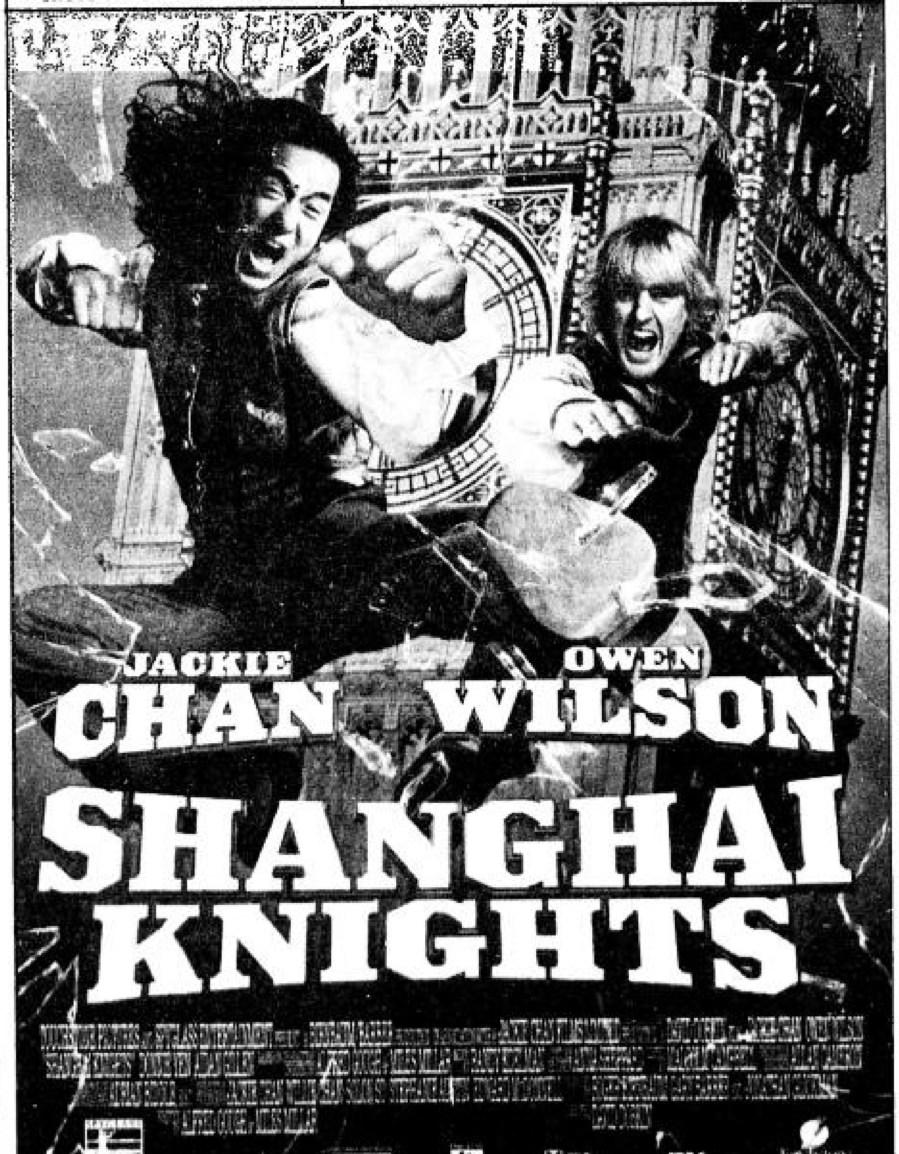

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50 homes lost in QC slum fire

By Alcuin Papa

AN HOUR-LONG fire hit a slum community in Quezon City yesterday, burning down around 50 shanties.

The blaze hit a group of houses located at the Pagkaisa Compound on Visayas Avenue, Quezon City, near the Gem V Subdivision, fire investigators said.

The authorities have yet to determine the cause of the fire, which started at around 11:45 a.m.

Responding firemen battled the blaze until they managed to put it out at around 12:45 p.m., investigators said.

Michael Santos, a resident of the area, was reportedly injured after he was hit in the head by falling debris, authorities said.

Santos is now receiving treatment at the East Avenue Medical Center.

ABOUT 500 families now have no homes to call their own after a fire razed their community in Binondo, Manila on Thursday.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Lotto rob-slay suspects freed

By Nelson F. Flores

GOVERNMENT prosecutors recently ordered the release of five men accused of robbing and killing lotto winner Arturo Eupeña in Antipolo City late last year.

On the recommendation of Prosecutor Emmanuel Pascual, suspects Joselito Rose, Aurelio Omega, Lito Abarico, Eric Peñalosa and Noel Pinoso Olmoroto have been released from the Antipolo City Jail pending further investigation.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Pascual said there were inconsistencies in the testimony of witness Reynan Eupeña, adopted son of the slain victim. He also said that the police charges against some of the suspects were without merit.

Records at the Antipolo City Jail showed that Rose, Omega and Abarico were released on Jan. 29. The rest were freed on Feb. 3.

Supt. Jose Dayco, Antipolo City police chief, said he was surprised when he learned that the suspects have been released. But he admitted that some of the suspects were arrested merely because they were present when police found the goods that were allegedly stolen from the Eupeña residence.

Dayco said that possession of the loot is enough reason for the suspects to be arrested.

Most of the suspects claimed that they did not know that the things they were looking after were stolen, Dayco said.

Police records showed that Eupeña was killed on Oct. 28, while he was asleep in his house in Barangay San Roque, Antipolo City.

The victim had just won the lotto pot a few days before he was robbed and killed, records showed.

At least five armed men barged in the house of Eupeña and shot him at close range when he allegedly tried to resist them. The robbers then left and took with them the newly bought Toyota Hi-Ace van of the family.

Later, the police recovered the loot including Eupeña's van worth P1.3 million, an improvised shotgun with ammunition and a .45-caliber pistol which police believed was the weapon used to kill the victim.

The police said when Velasco was arrested he was recuperating from a gunshot wound he reportedly sustained while robbing Eupeña, who was allegedly able to fire his gun, a .45 caliber pistol, before he was killed.

At NBI, fingerprint-matching to be made easy with high-tech gadgetry

By Jerry Esplanada

LIFTING a fingerprint in a crime scene may be a piece of cake for National Bureau of Investigation agents. However, finding a match with the 22 million-plus fingerprint specimens in the NBI files is another story.

But that hassle will soon be a thing of the past once the bureau acquires a fully automated fingerprint ID system, among other top-of-the-line crime-fighting equipment, said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

"With the computerized system, finding a match with the millions of fingerprint specimens in our possession will just take one to 10 minutes," Wycoco told the INQUIRER.

The NBI is currently considering the offer of an American and a Japanese firm, which are offering "very good terms for the high-tech equipment."

Wycoco revealed that the equipment costs P1.5 billion, more than double the bureau's annual budget of P650 million.

"The Japanese group wants to do it on a build-operate-transfer scheme," he said. "In the case of the Americans, I think it's going to be part of a grant. The money will come from the so-called 'Justice Fund' of the US government, the special budget intended for anti-terrorist activities after 9/11."

Wycoco said he believes that the acquisition of that piece of equipment would do wonders to the bureau's crime-fighting capability.

"We hope to have the new fingerprint ID system installed within the year," he said.

Cameo

But other interesting developments are also happening at the NBI, like the "confidence-building movie project" called "The Cory Quirino Kidnap," a production of Golden Lion Films based on the experiences of then TV producer and host Cory Quirino.

Wycoco has a cameo part in the movie. He plays himself.

"That's why, I don't need to really act or overact," he said.

On the movie project, he said he was more concerned about "getting the people's support in the fight against crime."

"We expect the people to report to us crimes committed against them . . . just like what happened in the Cory Quirino case. The culprits should be arrested and brought to justice."

The NBI cracked the Quirino case in the mid-1990s.

On April 30, 1998, Manila Judge Maximiano Savellano sentenced five men to death for the robbery and kidnapping of Quirino, granddaughter of the late President Elpidio Quirino, in Caliraya Lake, Quezon.

The five men—Leonardo Eliseo, Anselmo Drece, Roberto Cueto, Alfredo Asebo and Romeo Galusmo—are in their fifth year at the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

A sixth suspect, Rufino Drece, was spared the death penalty, but was found guilty of illegal possession of firearms. He was sentenced to four to six years in prison.

A policeman for the most part of his career, Wycoco once headed Task Force Dragon, the PNP anti-kidnaping task force.

Remarkable gains

Last year, the bureau "scored well in 2002, posting remarkable gains."

Wycoco even vowed to "better the previous record."

"We handled several high-profile cases, among the most memorable of which was the cracking of the Dacer-Corbito double-murder case," he said.

"We have filed charges against the principals but we have yet to get the mastermind, if not the masterminds."

In the same list are the extradition of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, the intensified drive against pirated tapes, the P2.2-billion shabu bust in Valenzuela and the Land Bank case, a classic case of the white-collar crime called money laundering resulting from tax scams.

WYCOCO

Wycoco also cited the "devolution of major functions and the delegation of authority" to regional directors, which he claimed was a "first for the bureau."

"It means less load for the head office and at the same time, makes our regional bosses closer to the people," he said. "We're developing a new generation of responsible leaders here."

Last year, the NBI wrapped up the investigation of 48,819 cases (from 47,742 in 2001), including those handled by the Investigative and Intelligence Services, which handled 12,110 cases.

Of the 9,258 cases terminated by the division, more than 4,700 were recommended for prosecution.

Technical services rendered by NBI experts in forensic medicine and chemistry, questioned documents, ballistics, polygraphy, dactyloscopy and investigative photography totaled 23,733 cases.

More than P300 million in clearance fees were collected by the NBI which went straight to the National Treasury.

Convict mayor bares uncle's abduction

By Christian Esguerra

A RELATIVE of ex-mayor Rey Yap has allegedly gone missing after visiting the murder convict at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa late last week.

Nothing has been heard from Elvis Villanueva, 34, said to be a distant uncle of Yap, and Villanueva's driver Rosello Bation, 21, after they reportedly met with the former Misamis Occidental town mayor at the NBP's disciplinary cell Friday afternoon.

The Yap camp claimed at least seven heavily armed men commandeered the gray Mitsubishi L-300 van (KCD-191) of Villanueva, snatching them right at the city hall quadrangle in front of the police station.

Their wives reported them missing at 1:45 p.m. the following day

But Supt. Erasto Lim Sanchez, city police chief, yesterday expressed doubt that the two had been abducted.

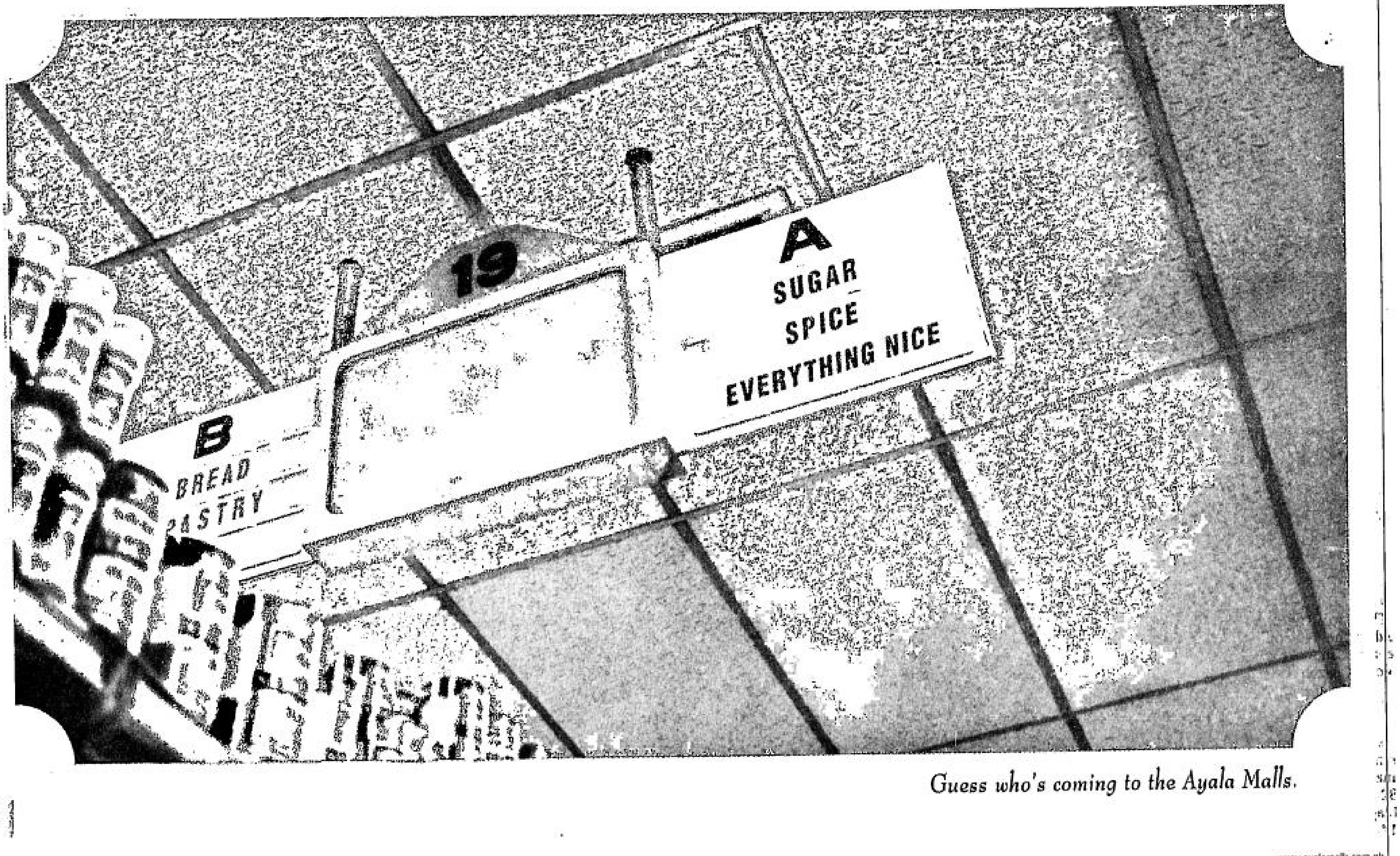
"We've asked around and nobody could recall seeing armed men kidnapping anyone that Friday afternoon," he told the INQUIRER.

"If there was indeed an abduction, there should have been at least one person who had seen it," he said. "There were many people in the quadrangle that time. The police station is located there."

But the Yaps maintained that there was an abduction and that it was supposedly part of a plot to kill the ex-mayor and his brother Roy at the NBP. The Yap brothers are serving life terms for masterminding the murder of a political rival in 1992.

Rey Yap claimed that a prominent inmate has been plotting with prison and police officials to set up the ex-mayor for the kill. He claimed his transfer to the disciplinary cell set the stage for his supposed liquidation.

On Feb. 5, police said they seized around P300,000 in fake money from Yap's original cell at the maximum security compound, prompting prison officials to haul him to the punishment cell in Building 14.



Guess who's coming to the Ayala Malls.

www.ayalamalls.com.ph

Good Samaritans come to the aid of Danierette

By Dennis Eroa

"THEY didn't think twice," Imelda Remoto-Guiang said of the people who helped her nine-year-old Danierette Ayn Guiang.

The mother said she felt blessed by the support given by INQUIRER readers to her only child, who is waging a gallant fight against a deadly brain disease.

Ayn's classmates at St. Columban in Olongapo City also sent letters and prayers for her speedy recovery.

Ayn is presently confined at the UST's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Ayn needs P20,000 a day for her treatment.

The INQUIRER broke the story of Ayn, a leukemia survivor on Feb. 4. It drew massive response from Good Samaritans.

"We appeal to Health Sec. Manuel Dayrit and Hoffman-La Roche for help in getting Ancoban (Flucytosine) capsules, which are not available in the country," said Imelda. "We also need Timentin vials which are manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline Philippines."

Giant companies, Pfizer and Bristol Myers Squibb immediately came to the rescue.

Kimmy Coseteng, Pfizer's corporate affairs manager, and Jun Grimares, specialization district manager, personally handed the needed drugs.

Jo-Ann Marie Salamat, corporate affairs manager of Bristol Myers Squibb, general manager Bernard Dragon, general manager and Ike Villanueva, brand manager, also gave their support.

The Guiangs were moved also by the generosity of Olongapo City Mayor Kate Gordon and Zambales Rep. James Gordon. The Gordons were the first to react to Ayn's call for support.

"The Gordons lifted our spirits," said Imelda, who made special mention of city administrator Liza Zaballa and Ferdie Magrata of the James Gordon Memorial Hospital.

Ayn's parents can be reached at (0917) 893-3135.

GUIANG

Missing undies triggers killing

By Alcuin Papa

JUST because his daughter's underwear was missing, Jose Eramis, a paralyzed driver, stabbed to death his wife and mauled his daughter in Quezon City Wednesday night.

Police said Jose, 57, of Culiat, Quezon City, stabbed his wife Amor, 51 and beat up his daughter Joan, 22.

Investigation revealed that at around 7 p.m., Joan quarrelled with Jose over her missing underwear. Amor joined in the argument and sided with Joan.

Unable to take the verbal abuse, Jose started to maul Joan. Amor came to the aid of Joan by hitting the suspect with his rattan cane.

This angered Jose, who picked up a kitchen knife and stabbed Amor in the left side.

Jose tried to flee but was apprehended by responding barangay watchmen.

Amor was taken to the East Avenue Medical Center where she died. Joan is undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

Neighbors of the Eramis family said they heard Joan shouting about her missing underwear. They also said the mother and the daughter frequently quarrelled with Jose after he was paralyzed.

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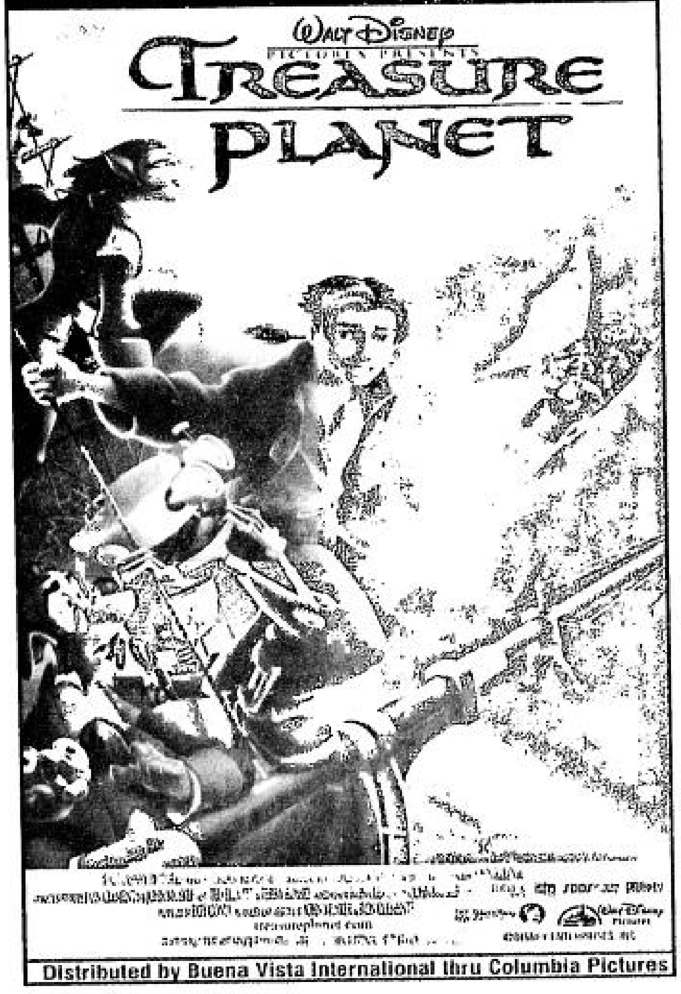
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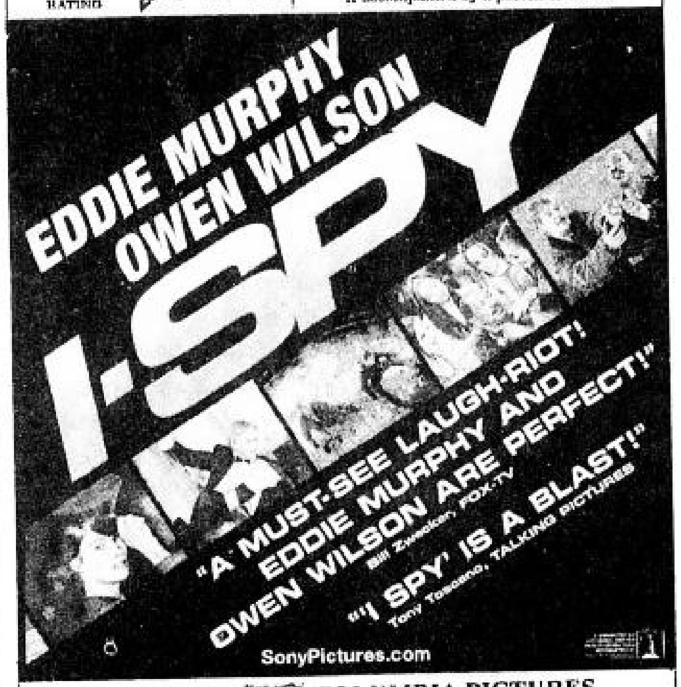
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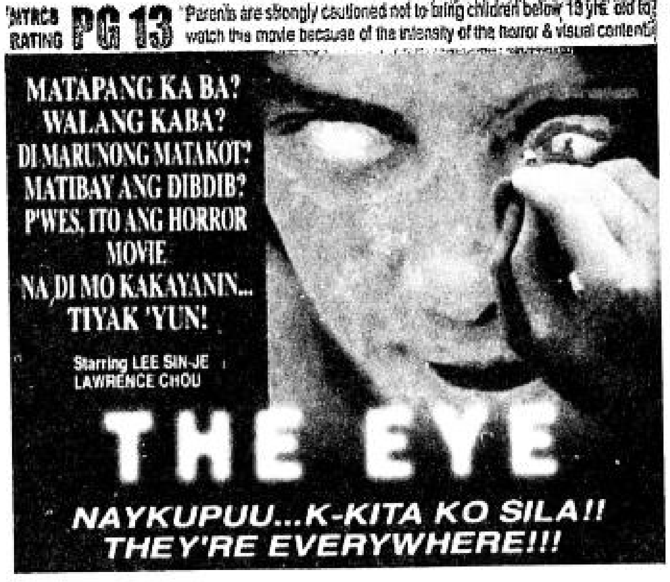
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WALANG KABA?
DI MARUNONG MATAKOT?
MATIBAY ANG DIBDIB?
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リング 2
Ring 2
Call of Evil
THE SEQUEL TO THE ORIGINAL JAPANESE VERSION IS COMING!

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BLOOD RELATION / PICK-UP GIRLS
ODEON	SHANGHAI NIGHTS
ODEON-2	SEX EDUCATION / RATRATAN
ROBEN	BETTER THAN SEX
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	TUXEDO / CLOCK STOPPER

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAGNIFICO
CORONET B	CHANGING LANES / THE WILD SIDE
QUEZON-1	BETTER THAN SEX
REMAR	SHANGHAI NIGHTS
REMAR-2	BALAT SIBUYAS

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	AB NORMAL
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	I SPY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-6	EYES
CINEMA-7	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THEY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	HERO
CINEMA-12	WHITE OLEANDER
CINEMA-14	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-15	MAGNIFICO

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THEY **P13** 11:00,1:00,3:00, 5:00,7:00,9:00	**TWO WEEKS NOTICE** **P13** 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:55,10:20	**CATCH ME IF YOU CAN** **P13** 11:10, 2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30
HERO **P13** 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	**WHITE OLEANDER** **P13** 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50	**SHANGHAI KNIGHTS** **GP** 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:20

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	AB NORMAL
Ali 2	MAGNIFICO
Ali 3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 4	HERO
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	WHITE OLEANDER
Ali 7	THEY

FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS

Farmers 1	AB NORMAL
Farmers 2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

ARANETA COLISEUM

FEB 13	RONAN KEATING CONCERT
FEB 14	SIDE A AND FREESTYLE
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT

ELEPHANT WORLD

FEB 13	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 14	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 15	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

NBI busts another pyramid scam firm

By Philip Tubeza and Christian Esguerra

VANESSA Santos and Ernesto Lavarias try to cover their faces after they were arrested for figuring in the MTST pyramid scam. The firm reportedly fleeced countless investors of nearly a billion pesos. DENNIS SABANGAN

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has charged another firm for a "pyramiding scheme" that defrauded investors of P25 million, NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said on Wednesday.

Wycoco identified the erring firm as the Tibayan Group Investment Co., Inc, (TGICI) which held office at the Tibayan Group Business Gallery Building on Alabang-Zapote Road, Las Piñas.

The firm is owned by businessman Jesus Tibayan.

NBI agents arrested TGICI officers Rico Puerto, Rosemarie Nina, Pranee Mayuga, Virgilio Gundayao, Liezel Cortez, and Melenie J. Kagahastian, when they raided the firm's office on Feb. 7.

Head Agent Ferdinand Lavin, chief of the NBI-Anti-Organized Crime Division, said twelve people initially filed a complaint against TGICI because it defrauded them of P25 million.

After an initial investigation, the NBI applied and got a search warrant from Executive Judge Bonifacio Sanz Maceda, of the Las Piñas Regional Trial Court on Feb. 6.

The following day, NBI agents raided TGICI's office and found "voluminous documents pertaining to their anomalous activities," Wycoco said.

TGICI's officers were arrested and were later charged with estafa, violation of PD 1689, and RA 8799.

The suspects have been detained at the NBI headquarters, while lawmen are still out looking for Tibayan.

"It is noteworthy that the initial batch of complainants were followed up by over 50 new complainants who trooped to the NBI to file their complaints against Tibayan," Wycoco said. "Many more are expected to follow suit."

Earlier, the NBI has charged earlier seven firms for defrauding investors of P600 million in "pyramiding schemes."

Wycoco identified these firms last week as the Mateo Management Group Holdings of couple Ervin and Evelyn Mateo; Asia Pacific Alliance Management Inc.; Kimberly Management; Rosario Baladjay's Multitel; Maria Teresa Santos Trading of spouses Orlando and Ma. Teresa Santos; ICS Export; and International Services.

On Monday, a businessman engaged in another pyramid scam killed himself in Pasay City allegedly because he was being hounded by claimants.

Joel Castillo, 33, shot himself in the right temple inside his unit at Sommerset Condominium at around 2:45 p.m., police said.

His friend Casiano Sta. Maria rushed him to the Manila Sanitarium where he died at 4:15 p.m.

Prior to the suicide, the businessman was being pursued by investors in his holding company, initial investigation showed.

Man killed by exploding oxygen tank

By Tina Santos

A HELPER met an untimely death when the oxygen tank he was filling up accidentally exploded early yesterday morning in Caloocan City.

Dennis Viscaya, 21, who worked as a stay-in helper at the Tim Builders Incorporated, died instantly, according Supt. Honorato Donato of the Northern Police District Office.

Police said Viscaya and Juanito Kinkita, 37, were filling up oxygen tanks at around 3:30 a.m. inside the company compound in Kaunlaran Village, Caloocan, when the accident happened.

As they were moving on to fill up a tank, it suddenly caught fire and exploded.

Kinkita managed to escape unhurt. But Viscaya was not as lucky. He was instantly killed in the powerful explosion, police said.

Chopped up in Caloocan

By Tina Santos

MYSTERY shrouds the death of a security guard, whose body had been chopped up in Caloocan City Thursday.

Police said victim Melchor Cabana, a resident of Heritage Village, Marilao, Bulacan, worked for the Christian Safety and Allied Security Services, and was detailed at the Industrial Village Corp. in Barangay Kaybiga, Caloocan.

The mutilation of Cabana's body indicated that the killer harbored deep-seated anger on the victim, police said.

PO3 Alex Baruga said Cabana's colleagues found his dismembered body at around 1:30 a.m.

THAT'S LIFE

Ruben Rason (left) and his wheelchair-bound wife Elisa beg for a living. And what a life these two must have, sharing each other's company for 30 years. DENNIS SABANGAN

Parañaque allots P1M for OFWs in case US-Iraq war breaks out

IN CASE the US-Iraq war erupts, returning overseas contract workers who are residents of Parañaque City will receive financial support from their city government.

Mayor Joey P. Marquez yesterday said the city council, through a resolution, will allot P1 million for OFWs from Parañaque if war breaks out to "help them start afresh or set up a business, however small, in their country of birth."

Marquez announced this shortly after joining about 1,000 disabled people, including special children, in an early morning walk-for-a-cause that ushered in Parañaque's celebration of its fifth anniversary as a city.

Parañaque was converted into a city through Republic Act No. 8507 signed by former President Fidel Ramos on Feb. 13, 1998.

According to Marquez, qualified to receive the cash assistance are OFWs who are Parañaque residents or whose families have been actually staying in the city for at least one year.

"Reports about the possibility of a war are already discouraging enough," said Marquez. "How much more traumatic it would be for our countrymen in the Middle East if it happened and took them away from their jobs?"

The P1-million cash assistance for OFWs makes the city the first local government unit in the country that has a definite support program in the eventuality of a US-Iraq war.

Last year, Malacañang confered on Parañaque a Gawad Kalasag "in recognition of its excellence in disaster management."

Cops given the gift of phone gab

By Abigail Ho

PHILIPPINE National Police personnel have been trained to make quick responses to phone-in complaints through a workshop with Lopez-owned Customer Contact Center Inc.

With the recent implementation of the TXT PNP 2920 program, PNP officials and personnel are regularly on their toes, especially when they start receiving complaints from mobile phone subscribers all over the country.

"Our goal is to improve our response time to our fellow Filipinos for assistance. And this is the first time that a call center has offered to assist us in our efforts to improve the PNP's TXT 2920 crime prevention program," PNP police community relations group director Gen. Dick de Leon said.

The PNP TXT 2920 program enables cellular phone-wielding individuals to air their complaints, whether against lawless elements or crooked PNP personnel, via text messaging.

These messages will be received and processed by the PNP's complaints, referral, action, investigation and verification center in Camp Crame.

After processing, these will be forwarded to appropriate PNP units and offices all over the country.

PNP officials said this new service was a good way to bring the PNP closer to the people.

Aside from complaints, mobile phone owners can also text incident reports, crime information, comments, suggestions and inquiries.

PNP officials were introduced to call center best practices during C-Cubed's seminar-workshop.

Caloocan mob collars robber with a toy gun

GEORGE Villarit must have thought he was smart when he decided to rob a hamburger stand, and pulled it off, just by using a toy gun.

But Villarit's luck ran out when an angry mob and patrolling policemen heard of his heist and chased him just after dawn yesterday in Caloocan City.

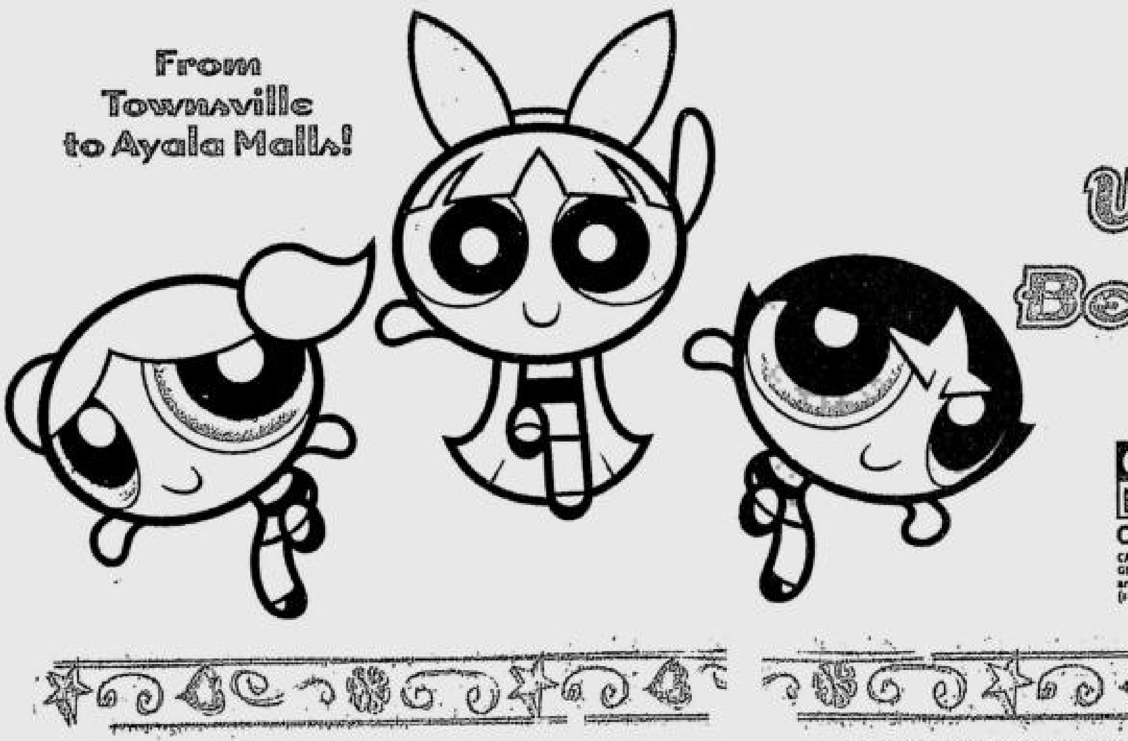
Villarit, 21, of 2nd Avenue, Caloocan, sat down at a Burger Machine stand being tended by Violy Delorino, 19, at around 12:30 a.m. at the corner of Mauban Street and A. Bonifacio Avenue, Quezon City, and pretended to be a customer, police said.

But instead of ordering a hamburger, he pulled out a toy gun and held up Delorino, who thought it was a real pistol. Without a word, she immediately handed her P800 earnings over to Villarit.

Villarit then fled on foot with the loot. But he caught the attention of bystanders, who began to follow him.

As he got to the corner of Busa and Tagaytay Streets, Barrio San Jose, Caloocan, he came across P02 Marco Antonio and P01 Epidio Espinosa, who joined the pursuit.

Villarit was later caught, handcuffed and hauled off to jail for robbery. *Tina Santos*



Saving the World Before Bedtime.

From Townsville to Ayala Malls!

The Powerpuff Girls LIVE! in Saving the World Before Bedtime Musical

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AYALA CENTER
GLORIETTA • GREENBELT
February 20 6pm
February 21 3pm, 6pm
February 22 & 23
11am, 3pm, 6pm
Glorietta Activity Center

AYALA CENTER CEBU
February 28 4pm, 6:30pm
March 1 11am, 3pm,
5:30pm, 7:30pm
March 2 11:30am, 3pm, 6pm
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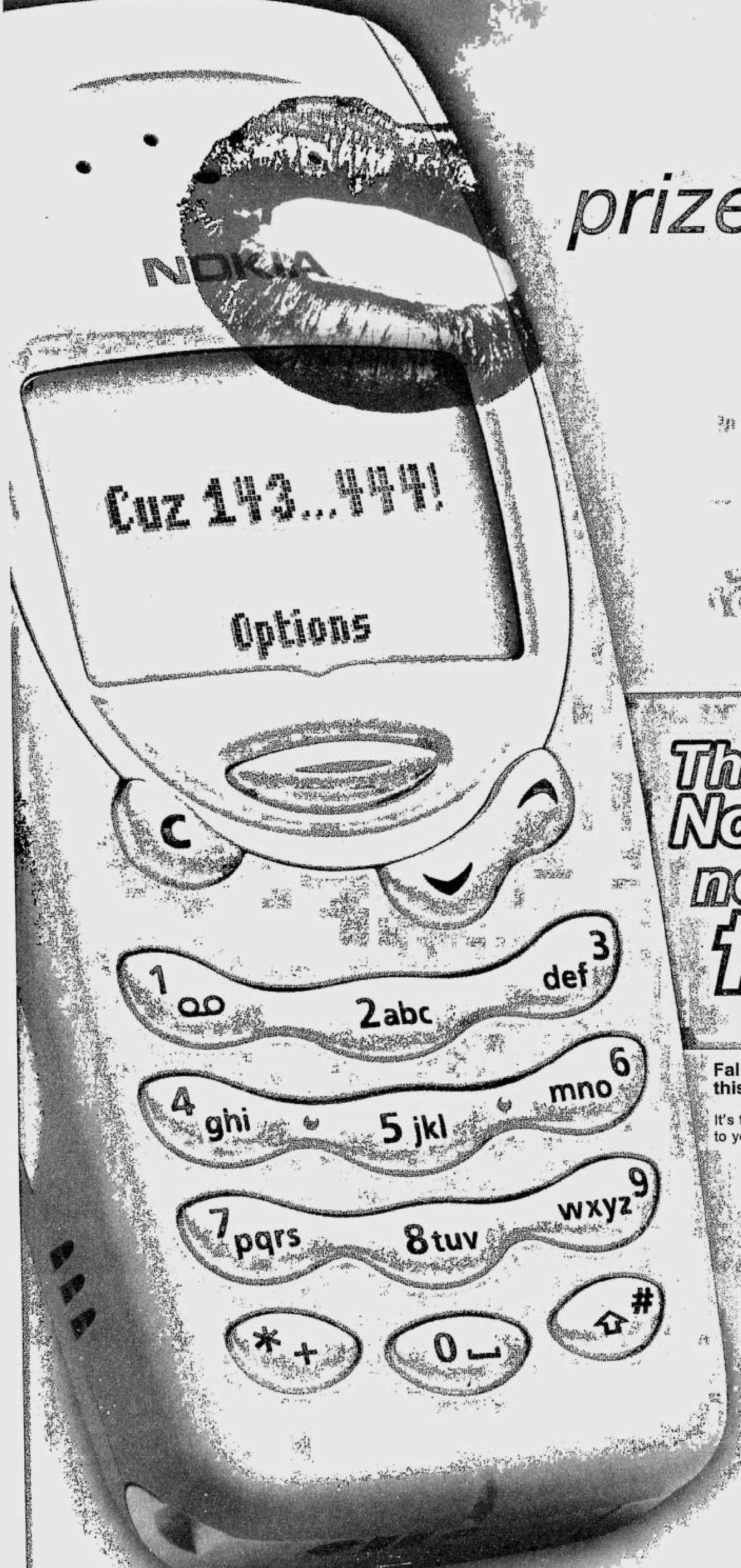
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Suspension of tax on diesel pushed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy yesterday said it was pushing for a 30-day temporary suspension of the 3-percent import duty for diesel amid the continued rise of fuel prices due to heightened tensions in the Persian Gulf.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said his department adopted the new tack as the Department of Finance had earlier declined to suspend the levy on all oil imports.

"What we now propose is a suspension of the import duty for diesel only, as this is the primary fuel for public transport," Perez said. "Maybe this is more acceptable to the DOF."

The energy chief added that discussions on the matter were continuing and that no decision has been made.

A blanket suspension of the levy was implemented from December 2000 to February 2001 as a measure against a series of price increases then.

But the DOF declined a repeat of the suspension as the three-month freeze cost the government P1.5 billion in foregone revenues.

Perez also assured the public that the country's oil inventory was "in the best position" with 70 days of supply available—the highest in the region.

Perez said this was due to the imposition of a minimum inventory level for oil firms that took effect Feb. 3.

"But efforts like this is more important because we want a secure energy supply rather than an answer to terrorist threats," Perez said.

He also downplayed worries of supply disruption in case war broke out in the Persian Gulf.

"Major exporters of crude to the Philippines—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Iran—have their oil facilities far from the range of missile attacks from Iraq," Perez said.

But the official said further increases in local oil prices were inevitable considering an uptrend in global prices.

"Dubai crude has reached a three-year high of $30.28 per barrel as of (Thursday)," Perez said.

He said that, historically, fuel prices surged before the Gulf war in 1991 but that these "go down very quickly after the war started."

Local oil firms have said that there would be a second round of price increases in February after earlier raising prices of diesel by 39 centavos per liter and gasoline by 55 centavos.

DTI eyes $1B in food exports by 2004

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry's overseas trade agents are stepping up their promotion of food exports in line with the agency's target of selling $1.07 billion in food products by 2004.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the majority of the DTI's Foreign Trade Services Corps chose food as their priority food product for marketing this year over nine other top Philippine export products—construction materials, giftware and holiday decors, home furnishings, IT-enabled services; marine products, motor vehicle parts, microelectronics, organic and natural products, and wearable.

Roxas said market acceptance for the distinct taste of Philippine food was fast gaining ground around the world based on the sector's 14-percent growth last year.

Roxas said processed food exports to China were exceptionally strong last year and that the DTI was intent on taking advantage of this demand. Aside from China, the main markets for the country's food exports were Korea, the United States, and the Middle East.

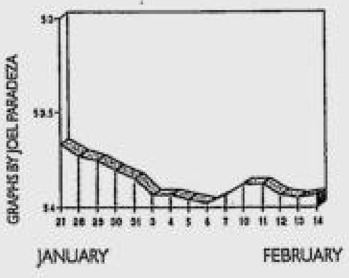
The DTI's foreign trade representatives recently held a workshop with food exporters to map out food products, commitments and doable priority activities such as increased participation in international food fairs and selling missions, spearheading of food festivals and sales blitz, and in-store promotion.

The FTSC officers have committed to provide market information, intelligence and networking services to food exporters to help them launch more focused strategy in penetrating overseas markets.

This include the provision of prospective buyers in different countries, market requirements and current and future food regulations, and market access issues such as tariff reduction schedule.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P53.935 $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2003

¥ 120.40 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2003

GOLD: $357.50-358.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.14, 2003

Feb. 14, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923532	1.000000	53.945000
Japan	Yen	0.007656	0.008290	0.447200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.495844	1.619700	87.374700
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118412	0.128217	6.916700
Switzerland	Franc	0.681171	0.737572	39.788300
Canada	Dollar	0.608667	0.659065	35.553300
Singapore	Dollar	0.526379	0.569963	30.746700
Australia	Dollar	0.549885	0.595415	32.119700
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.453004	2.656113	143.284000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246295	0.266688	14.386500
Brunei	Dollar	0.524883	0.568343	30.659300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021472	0.023250	1.254200
UAE	Dirham	0.251466	0.272287	14.688500
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.082800	58.411600
Argentina	Peso	0.296004	0.320513	17.290100
Brazil	Real	0.251849	0.272702	14.710900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134520	0.145658	7.857500
India	Rupee	0.019333	0.020934	1.129300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243067	0.263193	14.197900
Mexico	New Peso	0.084557	0.091558	4.939100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.510888	0.553189	29.841800
Norway	Kroner	0.132920	0.143926	7.764100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016006	0.017331	0.934900
South Africa	Rand	0.110935	0.120120	6.479900
Korea	Won	0.000768	0.000832	0.044900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109806	0.118898	6.414000
Syria	Pound	0.021989	0.023810	1.284400
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026684	0.028893	1.558600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000579	0.000627	0.033800

STOCK MARKET

Stocks drop on Iraq, weak corporate results

STOCKS led by telecom giant PLDT closed lower for a third day yesterday as war fears and lower-than-expected corporate results further dampened sentiment.

Analysts said investors set brushed aside some good news—the likelihood of a smaller than expected budget deficit in January and ratification of a stronger money laundering law—and focused on a report by the United Nations on weapons inspections in Iraq due out later yesterday.

"PLDT dropped despite recent strength in New York. Overhang of the war in Iraq continues to weaken sentiments," said BPI Securities investment analyst Spencer Yap.

"Weaker than expected earnings releases from select blue chips also dampened demand."

The key index fell 6.46 points or 0.62 percent at 1,033.73 points.

The market was down 0.78 percent on the week but has managed to be up 1.5 percent so far this year.

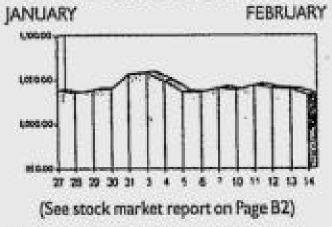
Value turnover dropped 19.2 percent to P157.34 million from Thursday's P194.76 million.

In the broader market, only eight stocks gained as 29 declined and 39 were unchanged.

"We expect the market to maintain its negative bias as the market seeks firmer support. Investors are also likely to stay liquid as war rhetoric heats up," said Yap who saw the market consolidating within the range of 980 to 1,070 points.

Reuters

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Gov't raises $321M from sale of eurobonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT raised $321 million from the sale of seven-year eurobonds, or lower than the original target of $500 million following uncertainties triggered by the Philippines' failure to enact a more acceptable law against money-laundering.

The seven-year bonds carried a yield of 9.25 percent and an annual coupon of 9.125 percent or a spread of about 5.5 percentage points over the euro Libor (London interbank offered rate).

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho credited the government for tapping the long-term euro-denominated bond offering again since 2001 and the first float in euros to mature beyond five year.

"Despite significant volatility in the global markets, international investors gave a strong sign of confidence in the Philippines, allowing us to not only significantly diversify our investor base but also to be the first Asian sovereign to extend into the seven-year matu-

GOV'T/B3

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PGA Cars, Inc.
201 EDSA, Mandaluyong City
Tel. (02) 727 0381 • Fax (02) 727 0390

Prestige Cars, Inc. (Libis)
184 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City
Tel. (02) 638 0734 • Fax (02) 438 0419

Prestige Cars Makati, Inc.
2324 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City
Tel. (02) 892 8127 • Fax (02) 816 7325

Pampanga Premier Cars, Inc.
Interim Showroom, along Olongapo-Gapan Road,
City of San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel. (045) 963 7777 • Fax (045) 963 3355

Cell card trade becomes cash trade

By Jette Dumpayan
Contributor

(Last of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

BAGUIO CITY—The daily increase in cell card subscriptions has overwhelmed the company. Its manager admitted traveling to Pangasinan, Pampanga, Metro Manila, and to any place where he can buy cell cards at lower prices.

Yet, the company still cannot source out enough to meet the demand of members particularly from the Mt. Province and other areas where the signal of other networks is nil.

To solve the problem, the company is "buying back" the cell cards at P275. This means that members can choose to receive cell cards or cash.

An "oversupply" of cell cards here has pulled down the earlier prevailing price of P280. More and more members prefer to receive cash either to fix the price or to avoid building up personal inventory.

They also do this so they will be able to reinvest in the scheme many times or so they can get all their money and profit out before the boom gets to bust.

"What I know is that our company gives a discount of up to only 11 percent to bonded bulk buyers. And there's a limit to the number of prepaid cell cards the buyers can get," said Raquel de Guia, center manager of Smart-Baguio.

At 11 percent, the company earns P33 per cell card with a P300 value. The markup is only P8 when members choose to get cash instead of cards.

BAGUIO'S latest craze

"It looks like the membership fees of recruits and the income plus borrowed money being rolled over by old members are the same money the company is compensating the members at the upper levels with... and as long as members keep recruiting and reinvesting, the company looks strong," said a company member.

But the scheme, according to a local bank executive, is "odd."

He calculated that with 50,000 members at single subscription each, the company has received P75 million in investments.

"Granting these members are all entitled to 48 cell cards due to multiple subscriptions and continuous recruitment, the company's liability to them is already P640.8 million. The company must be reinvesting the membership fees in necessarily fast ventures that can give it a monthly profit of more than 30 percent to cover for its obligations to members and operating expenses," he said.

But he asked: "With the sad state of our economy, what venture can give that much?"

Asked on how they can commit to double or triple their members' money in a short period, the company manager said that by releasing the cards in installments, they have the chance to reinvest the membership fees many times over "in no other products except cell cards."

CELL CARD/B3

Wobbles like the DAC

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

DEFINITELY something is wrong with the long-delayed government project to build an international airport terminal in Davao City.

For one, it is now three years under construction. It was supposed to be completed in June last year. Up to now, it is not yet finished. Moreover, work has stopped.

The question is, nevertheless, how can the Department of Transportation and Communication know—for sure—that something is wrong in the project.

Some say the DOTC must have a "sixth sense," for fearing that something bad could happen in the terminal, and that's why it stopped the construction work.

Or maybe it's just because the beams of the new building are already showing a lot of cracks, which are only the size of the Andreas Fault.

* * *

SOME congressmen, in fact, smelled something fishy in the project, and so they did to the poor DOTC guy in Davao City what you normally do to the tuna fish head.

The House transportation committee grilled the DOTC project manager there. The members went to Davao City themselves to conduct a public hearing.

Actually, they set up shop at the Max's Fried Chicken, not to eat lunch and, thus, spend a lot of our tax money, but only to "inquire" on the delayed project.

It seems that the Association of Structural Engineers of the Philippines, a.k.a. Asep, already recommended repair work for some 200 beams in the new building.

The Davao City airport terminal is, as I said, a virgin building. It has never been used. And so those "cracks" must be due to some defects in the construction.

In my time, you see, when we wanted to repair something, it was usually something much older already than both Johnny Enrile and Jovy Salonga combined.

* * *

FROM what I gathered, for those 200 or so beams for repair, the Asep recommended a method called "post-tensioning," which will mean an additional cost of only P70 million.

An additional cost like that, normally, is not a problem in this country. Usually, the public will have to pay for everything, after all.

But the problem in the Davao City project is this group called the DAC. It has nothing to do with a fowl from Peking. The DAC is the Davao Airport Consortium.

The government hired the DAC to take care of the terminal construction. Its list of members is a virtual "who's who" in the local construction business.

In the DAC lineup are names like those of Lindy Locsin, the famous architect, and Felipe F. Cruz Sr., the famous contractor who specializes in government projects.

Together with them is one of the leading design companies in the United States, a certain DMJM, which has a big office in Los Angeles.

The DAC members have this thing in their arrangement known as "jointly and severally." If one member talks, walks or wobbles for the DAC, so do all the others.

* * *

THAT means that, if the DMJM made a mistake in its design, for example, other members of the DAC are liable. In short, all of them must pay up.

It turns out, based on word going around, the DOTC itself has long established that the fault had something to do with the design.

One of the subcontractors, from what I gathered, wrote the DOTC to verify the design, even going to the extent of asking for a review.

The DAC went back to the DOTC, saying that it was "unethical" for the subcontractor to question the design. It was just a subcontractor, forgodsakes.

And so construction went on, until finally, the cracks started to show up like uninvited guests to the Valentine's Day party of Gloriaetta.

The DAC, its members joint and severally liable, are trying to cut the cost. It is working with the DOTC to agree on the repair of only 56 beams.

Moreover, according to some nosy congressmen, the DAC wants to use an inferior repair method called "carbon fiber technology."

It is actually a new technology, having been introduced in this country only in the past two years. The Asep does not want to accept it. Neither does the COA.

* * *

YOU see, the Commission on Audit reported that the beams actually sagged, and they would require "post tensioning."

The carbon fiber technique is just like Philip Cesar. You know—tapal king! You're just using a tape to cover the cracks, or something like that.

But the surprise package in the House hearing in Max's came from the main contractor itself, the Hanjin group of South Korea.

It turns out that Hanjin, which also got the contract for the long-delayed LRT II, only subcontracted 90 percent of all the work.

You could actually hear the whispers among the congressmen, according to my sources, that Hanjin was only after the project on ... well, "commission basis."

Moreover, during the time of former DOTC boss Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez, the DOTC already fired the DAC from the project.

Surprise, surprise—the same group made a comeback during the time of Transportation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza. Nobody can still give the congressmen any explanation.

* * *

WILL it or will it not pass the standards of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, a.k.a the Fat-F. Of course I am talking about the A-moll, which is the Anti-Money Laundering Law.

The suspense is killing me. What if the Fat-F does not like it? We just wasted a little of our lawmakers' time and a lot of our tax money.

We had to bear all the tension from those months of waiting, and the last-minute debates in the Senate, plus the heartrending public show of so much concern for public interest from our lawmakers that I could almost throw up.

If I remember right, making laws is the job of our congressmen and senators. In the language that my kids can understand, the lawmakers don't make pizza. And so Shakey's does not make laws.

* * *

FOR after all the hemming and hawing in Congress, we still could not even be certain the Fat-F would smile on our newly crafted A-moll.

The trigger point, an amount of P500,000 as threshold, went into the new law, as recommended by the Fat-F, but that's about it.

What does not look good is the list of predicate crimes which should automatically remove the veil of secrecy over bank deposits.

The law specifies three crimes, which are kidnapping, drugs and hijacking. Before I forget, the list includes "other related activities."

Look, the A-moll cannot even be any clearer than that. They should have just put "et cetera." It's easier to understand.

* * *

QUITE noticeably absent is the provision on graft and corruption. Yet this is a multi-billion industry, the grandmother of all illegal activities needing money laundering.

Therefore, the A-moll spares those who make oodles of money by stealing from us. For what comes to mind, when you talk of graft and corruption, are bigtime bribes, given by bigtime business to bigtime public officials.

Our public officials just passed a law which is, amazingly, silent on graft and corruption. It's as if the law is saying that graft and corruption do not exist here.

Thus, if you're in the government, you're safe. And since when did all the public officials become free of sins. What? Since when? Since they made the A-moll?

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, February 14, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
	BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES				
	BANKS				
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	29,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	34	34	33.5	34	177,600
China Banking Corp.	635	635	635	635	2,010
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	25.5	24.75	24.75	96,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	29.5	29	29	34,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	95	95	95	95	300
Philippine National Bank	27	27	27	27	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	54,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	29,500
	FINANCIAL SERVICES				
Manulife Financial Corp.	1220	1220	1220	1220	270
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	710,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	925	925	925	925	1,840
	COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL				
	COMMUNICATION				
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	11.75	11.75	5,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,600,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	530	525	525	540
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	3,300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	500,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	300	307.5	300	300	162,980
Ivantage Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	30,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	23,600,000
	POWER & ENERGY				
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	8.7	8.3	8.3	270,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	236,700
Petron Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.68	569,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	50,000
	TRANSPORTATION SERVICES				
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	77,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	17,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.02	2.02	2	2	10,000
	CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS				
Union Cement Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	30,000
	FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	58,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	3,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	57	56	57	340,200
San Miguel Corp. B	64	64.5	63.5	64.5	368,100
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.95	2.95	111,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
	HOLDING FIRMS				
Ayala Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.15	4.15	813,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	502,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.1	2.04	2.1	30,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	60,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.105	0.115	14,790,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.6	115,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.26	1.26	224,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	6,050,000
Music Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.165	0.175	1,750,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	210,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3	3	5,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	500,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
	MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING				
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	10,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.25	142,000
	HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES				
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
	BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS				
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	3,000
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	15,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	9,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.002	0.0022	0.002	0.002	8,000,000
	OTHERS				
Centro Escolar University	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	1,000
Far Eastern University	475	475	475	475	230
	PROPERTY				
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.85	385,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	220,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	650,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	4,911,000
	MINING				
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	290,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	19,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	11,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	670,000
	OIL				
Interport Res. B	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	1,000,000

DISCLOSURES

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. announced the election of Edmundo Barcelon as director of the company. It also reported the appointment of Arthur Aguilar as president, Abelardo Bugay as senior vice president and Nilo Florcruz as vice president for manufacturing.

* * *

CENTRAL Azucarera de Tarlac disclosed that its labor union had filed a notice of strike before the National Conciliation and Mediation Board of the Department of Labor and Employment last Feb. 5. Conciliation and mediation proceedings are ongoing.

* * *

MEDCO Holdings Inc. denied having any information that could explain the 40-percent drop in its share price from P0.042 to P0.026 per share.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 6 to May 5, 2003.

* * *

CITYLAND Development Corp. will issue P1 billion worth of short-term commercial papers.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Telegraph and Telephone Corp. announced the resignation of Kenny Tantuico as corporate secretary. He will be replaced by Fina Bernadette Tantuico.

* * *

UNIWIDE Holdings Inc. disclosed the resignation of Cherrie Gow as chief operating officer of the company but she would continue to be a member of the board of directors. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa , PDI Research***

Team tasked to convince CalPERS to keep funds in RP

By Clarissa S. Batino

A DAMAGE control team is scheduled to meet with officials of the California Public Employees' Retirement System as well as Wilshire Consulting today to convince them not to drop the Philippines from CalPERS' list of investment destinations.

CalPERS, the biggest pension fund in the United States, was advised by Wilshire Consulting to divest from the Philippines and other Southeast Asian market.

While the fund has but a $30-million presence in the Philippine equities market, government sources said the influence of CalPERS to other foreign funds was very important. To be dropped from CalPERS' list could signal the others to do the same.

Philippine Ambassador to the US Alberto del Rosario and Philippine Stock Exchange president Ernest Leung lead the small damage control team that also includes Willy Ang of the PSE and Corazon Guidote, executive director of the government's Investor Relations Office.

Damage control and confidence building was how Guidote described what the team would try to do during the meetings with CalPERS and Wilshire.

The state-owned pension fund would decide on Feb. 18 whether it would drop the Philippines again from its list. A year ago, CalPERS said it would no longer invest in equities in the Philippines as well as in three other Southeast Asian economies for failing to meet its new standards for emerging market investments.

By mid-year, CalPERS reversed its decision and said it would bring back some $25 million in portfolio investments to the Philippines. Market players, however, said the pension fund had not actually returned in the local equities market. Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said it was "neither in nor out."

Camacho said Tuesday he was surprised with Wilshire Consulting's recommendation to CalPERS.

"I hope this is not Wilshire getting back at us for having proven it wrong in its earlier evaluation. I believe nothing much has changed since the last time CalPERS withdrew its decision to pull out. If at all, we are more stable now," said the finance chief.

Amando Tetangco Jr., deputy governor of the central bank, said the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo not to run in the 2004 elections so she could focus on reforms should be a strong signal to foreign investors like CalPERS that the Philippines was more equipped to fast-track reforms.

"Wilshire found that there have been some distractions in the Philippines that have prevented it from putting in place some important financial reforms to strengthen its financial markets," said a CalPERS official.

CalPERS manages around $133 billion in assets, with about $1.8 billion in emerging markets.

However, Camacho said the Philippines should not be singled out by foreign fund managers because "the whole world is unstable right now."

SMC earmarks P600M for CCBPI restructuring

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. is spending about P600 million this year to restructure soft drink bottler Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. which it bought back in 2001.

An SMC official said the extraordinary expenses would be used to rationalize the operations of CCBPI, particularly through an early retirement program for employees.

Last year, SMC booked about P837 million in extraordinary expenses for such a retirement program. But since the restructuring is not yet complete, there will still be non-recurrent expenses to be booked this year, the official said.

SMC repurchased CCBPI, which controls about 70 percent of the Philippine soft drink market, from Coca Cola Amatil of Australia in 2001 after selling it two years before.

The deal was in the form of stock, cash and debt swap worth a combined $1.24 billion in exchange for a 65 percent control of CCBPI, much lower than the $2.7 billion stock swap done in 1997 when SMC relinquished 70 percent control of the bottler in 1997.

SMC's consolidated net income for 2002 stood at P6.63 billion, reduced by about P837 million in one-time costs arising from its restructuring, primarily retirement and benefit expenses.

Before restructuring, its consolidated net income stood at P7.2 billion or 40 percent higher than a year ago.

Nevertheless, the company said the acquisitions and subsequent programs to restructure and synergize sales marketing and distribution capabilities had enabled the SMC group to protect and strengthen market positions across majority of its businesses resulting in a 19 percent volume growth in 2002.

It was not known how many employees would be affected by the CCBPI streamlining program this year.

Worldcom, AT&T accused of bullying RP

By Abigail L. Ho

DOMINANT carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has accused United States carriers AT&T Corp. and Worldcom Inc. of "bullying" local telecommunications firms into bringing down their rates despite an apparent need for an upward rate adjustment.

A person privy to the matter yesterday said that most of the world's major carriers had already accepted the local carriers' united stand to increase their termination rates to $0.12 per minute.

The two US carriers, however, continued to staunchly oppose the new international rate and even accused PLDT and other Philippine carriers of blocking calls coming from AT&T and Worldcom's networks.

"The action of AT&T and MCI (Worldcom) against Filipino telecommunications companies is simple bullying. While big telephone companies worldwide have agreed to the new rates, AT&T and MCI Worldcom want us to swallow their low rates and keep all the profits for themselves," the source said.

The termination rate refers to what an "originating" carrier pays another carrier where the call is "terminated."

Almost 100 carriers worldwide accepted the new rate. These include Canadian carriers Teleglobe and Telesus, and American firms Sprint, Teleglobe USA, Keywest, Pamtel, Pactel, Locus and Global 9, the source said.

BOC sets duty on vehicles assembled in ecozones at 3-7%

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BUREAU of Customs has ruled that vehicles assembled inside economic zones and sold in the domestic market would be slapped the 3 to 7 percent duty for completely knocked down (CKD) units and not the 30-percent duty for completely built up (CBU) units.

In Customs Administrative Order No. 1-2003, Customs Commissioner Antonio M. Bernardo said CBUs assembled from CKDs inside ecozones would be slapped CKD rates provided that the withdrawal for local consumption should not exceed the threshold allowed or permitted for such withdrawals pursuant to existing laws and regulations. Bernardo said domestic sales in excess of the threshold should be slapped CBU tariff rates.

The BOC ruling was made in response to a petition by the Board of Investments and the Department of Trade and Industry seeking the clarification of the tax status of CBUs assembled from CKD packs by participants in the Motor Vehicle Development Program.

Bernardo said the rule was adopted to provide a level playing field for all MVDP participants and to support Malacañang's order to spur the development of the motor vehicle industry under Executive Order No. 156.

The BOI and DTI were forced to seek a clarification from the BOC after Ford Motor Co. Philippines Inc. complained that it was being discriminated against by the BOC which was charging the American carmaker 30 percent on its imports when other MVDP players were being levied only 3 to 7 percent.

Laguna Customs Collector Edward Baltazar had sent a demand letter to Ford last December seeking payment of P488.557 million in unpaid duties from the importation of 4,366 Ford Lynx, Ranger, and Escape vehicles in the last three years.

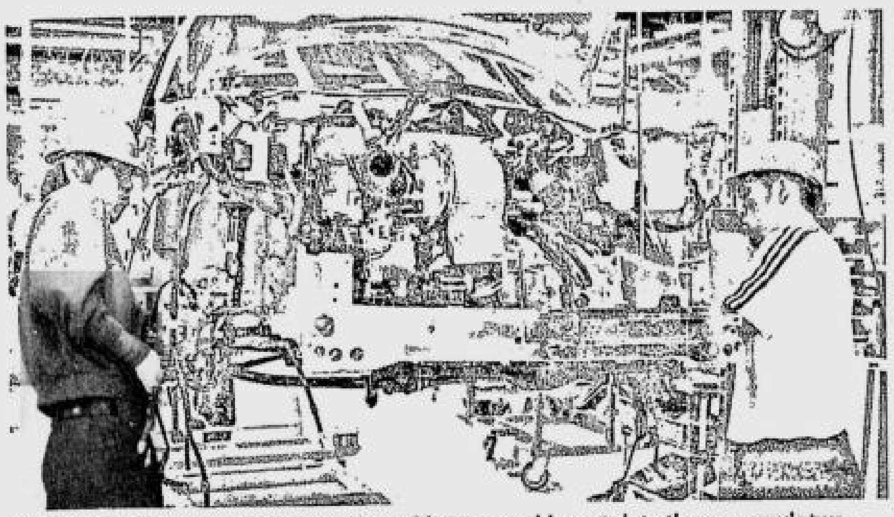
Baltazar contended that that the Ford vehicles should be assessed CBU duties of 30 percent once they were sold in the Philippines. Ecozone locators are normally granted tax- and duty-free imports on condition that they export at least 70 percent of their output.

In Ford's case, it was the first domestic-oriented company allowed by the government to operate inside an economic zone (the Greenfield Automotive Park economic zone) and avail of perks reserved for export firms.

Ford argued that as an MVDP member, its output should only be assessed at CKD rates just like its peers in the industry since all the vehicles it sold in the Philippines were assembled in its Laguna factory and not imported as CBUs. The government gives lower duties to CKDs to encourage the local assembly of vehicles in the country.

STRONG DEMAND,EXPORTS

Japan posts surprising 0.5% GDP growth



WORKERS of Japan's automaker Daihatsu Motor assemble parts into the company's two-seater sports car Copen at Daihatsu's Ikeda factory in Osaka, Feb. 13. Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 0.5 percent in the three months to December from previous quarter. AFP

TOKYO—Defying gloomy expectations, Japan's economy chalked up surprisingly strong growth of 0.5 percent in the last three months of 2002 thanks to healthy exports and stronger than expected demand at home.

But the rare dose of good news was tempered by the slower pace of the expansion and the data failed to dispel doubts about the sustainability of the now year-long recovery.

Apart from deflation and worries about a war in Iraq, uncertainty also lingered over who the prime minister will select as new head of the Bank of Japan, which continued to frustrate many politicians on Friday by leaving monetary policy unchanged.

The government said earlier that gross domestic product in the world's second-largest economy expanded by 0.5 percent in real terms in October-December to mark four straight quarters of growth since Japan emerged from its worst postwar slump.

That was much better than the average forecast in a Reuters poll of a 0.3 percent contraction, and translated into annualized growth of 2.0 percent, but it still meant the economy slowed.

GDP grew by 0.7 percent in the previous quarter and 1.3 percent in April-June.

Merrill Lynch economist Jesper Koll called the latest figures a "one off wonder," saying the economy was still floundering in deflation now stretching into a fourth year.

The GDP deflator, seen as the broadest measure of price changes in the economy, came in at minus 2.2 percent for October to December, reflecting relentless falls in consumer prices that have deterred spending by consumers and companies.

"The urgency to appoint a true deflation-fighter at the Bank of Japan is not going to disappear with this report," Koll said.

"Net exports, capital expenditure and consumption ... are all pointing south," he said.

Nominal GDP, which does not account for deflation, fell 0.1 percent on the quarter, showing the economy is still struggling.

Real GDP for all of 2002 grew a measly 0.3 percent.

The rise in GDP keeps Japan from the jaws of another recession, but pressure remains strong on the Bank of Japan to take tougher action against deflation under a new governor that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi must select in the coming weeks.

Reuters

US economy set to pick up pace

WASHINGTON—The prospect of a war with Iraq is making businesses cautious on spending and restraining the US economy, but when these jitters ease, the recovery should pick up too, a business economics group said on Friday.

"Rising tensions in the Middle East are coloring business decisions and hampering US economic growth," National Association for Business Economics President Tim O'Neill said in a statement that echoed views expressed earlier this week by Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan.

The consensus of 37 forecasters surveyed by NABE was for US gross domestic product to grow a tepid 2.7 percent this year, just a bit more than last year's 2.4 percent gain, with the economy starting out slowly but speeding up once fears associated with a possible war in Iraq lifted.

"Resolution of the conflict will combine with stimulative monetary and fiscal policy to create much stronger conditions in the latter half of the year," said O'Neill, chief economist at BMO Financial Group.

The assessment that the economy is set to accelerate when war jitters dissipate is one shared by the US central bank.

"Our judgment, as best we can make it, is that there seems to be a fairly significant, almost inexorable, endeavor on the part of the economy to move forward but it is being held back by these set of (geopolitical) forces," Greenspan told Congress on Tuesday.

The NABE forecasters said the economy would likely grow at only a 2.7 percent annual rate in the first quarter, but would steam ahead at a strong 3.8 percent pace in the final three months of the year.

Reuters

Bush backs Greenspan, says too soon to speculate

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—The White House said on Thursday that President George W. Bush has confidence in Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan despite a rift over a new round of tax cuts, and that it was too soon to speculate about whether he would be reappointed.

"The president has a great deal of confidence in chair Greenspan. He believes he's doing an outstanding job," White House spokesperson Claire Buchan told reporters traveling with Bush to Jacksonville, Florida, where he said his $695 billion tax cut plan "makes sense" for the ailing economy and urged Congress to pass it.

Some Republicans—both inside and outside the White House—were fuming after Greenspan bluntly told Congress in closely watched hearings this week that economic stimulus was not needed right now and warned of the dangers of rising budget deficits.

Several Republican insiders said Greenspan, at the very least, soured relations with the White House, and raised questions about whether he would be reappointed to a new term in 2004. Greenspan has been reappointed to successive terms as chair of the Fed since 1987.

"He is wrong. He was wrong back when we were having the bubble and he is wrong now," said House of Representatives Majority Leader Tom DeLay, a Texas Republican, referring to Federal Reserve policies during the stock market price surge of the late 1990s.

Reuters

Cell card trade . . .

From page B1

Asked what he thinks would happen if nobody would be willing to be recruited anymore (saturation point, or if all members would suddenly stop reinvesting), the manager said they have created a "renewal system" to keep the company going.

A pyramiding scheme?

But members of the Cordillera Consumer Network said the company's business sure looks like a pyramiding scheme.

The Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394) prohibits "chain distribution plans or pyramid sales schemes" in the sale of consumer products.

In a pyramid sales scheme, revenues are derived more from participant's entry fees rather than from the sale of products, while a participant's income is dependent primarily upon his slot or position within the organization.

Pyramiding businesses tend to grow very fast. But they will collapse as fast when recruitment will reach a saturation point, or when participants have found a way to defeat the company or proprietors in their compensation plans or income structures.

If a business were a scam right at the beginning, the plotters would have run away with the participants' money before or immediately after the latter would find out.

If the company owners have meant well at the beginning, they would later find themselves against an overwhelming liability, from which they would rather seek refuge in jail.

Either way, many Cordillerans who have played big in these schemes have already lost so much money or found themselves deep in debt.

Vision from God

In one of the company's rare general meetings, the company owner told the members that he was just one of the directors of a networking company that operates nationwide marketing cell phones and cell phone accessories.

"At nagkataon lang daw na cell cards ang natoka sa kanya (It was just a coincidence that the products assigned to him were cell cards)," said a member.

But in a recent interview with the INQUIRER, the company owner related what he said was the "real" story behind his company.

He said the business plan was *"hindi gawa ng tao* (not manmade). *"Ito'y galing sa itaas* (It came from God)," he said.

He said he received the vision of the business while he was on duty at his quiet post at the Philippine Military Academy in 1999.

"Since then, I could not sleep. But if ever I did, God had been dictating to me, through a series of dreams, all the words I had written in the marketing guidelines, including corrections to all problems pointed out by people whom I had consulted about my business plan," he said.

The dreaming and writing persisted until the plan was perfected, he said.

He retired from the PMA in September 2001 and started his business under a single proprietorship. He had about 100 members before he incorporated.

"We deem it better to act on this case if we have a complainant first," said the consumer arbitration officers based at the Cordillera offices of the Department of Trade and Industry.

But filing a complaint is far from the members' minds, even if the company is changing its compensation scheme to its advantage.

Gov't raises $321M . . .

From page B1

rity in the strategic euro currency sector," he said.

The spread or the premium investors require for what they perceive as increased risks in placing their bets on the Philippines has gone up compared to less than five percentage points fetched by the 10-year global bonds issued in January and in November of 2002.

Given recent events, government sources said the spread was just appropriate.

"We targeted a range of 300 to 500 million euros but since the market was nervous about unfolding events, particularly the decision of the Financial Action Task Force, we decided to raise an amount that still makes a successful deal," said another government official.

Camacho said the country's financial markets were affected by the threats of the FATF sanctions.

The peso, however, moved between 53.88 and 53.92 to $1 yesterday after closing at 53.95 last Thursday.

The eurobond float was handled by Credit Suisse First Boston Ltd., Deutsche Bank, and JP Morgan Europe Ltd.

The proceeds of the bond sale would be used to complete a $2.4 billion foreign borrowing this year to finance a budget deficit of P202 billion.

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

More and more people are discovering the Weekend Market

KNOWN for its high quality fresh farm produce at good value. The Weekend Market at the grounds of the soon to open Market! Market! mall offers a wide array of fruit, flowers, vegetables, ornamental plants, fresh seafood and regional delicacies. Parking is not a problem and customers can conveniently shop in a very clean and spacious environment. These are what the Weekend Market is starting to be known for.

Shoppers from Makati, Taguig, Pasig, Malate and as far as Quezon City come every Friday and Saturday from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. to buy their favorites like: local and imported vegetables, cutflowers for their altars and centerpieces, kakanins for snacks, seafood for everyday fare and barbecue for parties.

As a homemaker working on a monthly budget, Liza from Quezon City, comments that she enjoys going to the Weekend Market with her children to buy ingredients for their favorite meals because of the affordability and variety it offers. Myra and her officemates from Taguig, on the other hand, save their lunch break every Friday to buy an assortment of vegetables, fruits and regional delicacies. Dindo, an entrepreneur from Pasig, was able to pre-order flowers for his wife to avoid the Valentine rush and a caterer from Makati orders seafood and vegetables every weekend because he is guaranteed of its freshness and reasonable prices.

The Weekend Market serves to give the public a taste of what Market! Market! will offer when it opens. A project of Liberty Real Holdings Corp., a subsidiary of Ayala Land Inc., Market! Market! is primarily envisioned to be a regional retail hub that brings together a unique mix of retail, dining and entertainment choices for the value-conscious Filipino shopper. Being built on a 9.7 hectare property along C-5 Road at the Bonifacio Global City, this five-level, 150,000 square meter shopping mall, will offer the best value in shopping, dining and entertainment with all the comfort, convenience and security that the Ayala Malls are known for.

For inquiries, please call 752-8009, 815-8003 local 202 and 203, 0916-3342430, or 0916-7018135.

Aurelio Periquet Jr. Business Leadership Awards

THE AWARDING ceremonies of the prestigious Aurelio Periquet Jr. Business Leadership Awards was held last Dec. 13 during the 28th Philippine Business Conference at the Manila Hotel. Conferring the awards was President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The awards are presented annually by the Aurelio Periquet Jr. Foundation, in cooperation with the Manila Jaycees, the Metrobank Foundation, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Manila Bulletin Corporation.

Now on its fifth year, the award is conferred to two outstanding business leaders who are not only successful in their respective fields, but also who have dedicated their lives in the service of the country.

The 2002 Pearl award (35 years and below) was given to PDI president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, and the Pillar award (36 years and above) to Henry Lim Bon Liong, chair of the Sterling Paper Group of Companies. Both awardees were beaming with pride as they received their trophies designed and sculpted by world-renown Ramon Orlina.

Hundreds of prominent leaders from the public and private sectors came to grace the awarding ceremonies. Leading the government sector were Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, DTI Secretary Mar Roxas, Agriculture Secretary and past awardee Cito Lorenzo, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, and Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye. The roster of luminaries from the country's leading business organizations were led by PCCI president Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr.; former Finance Secretary Jose Pardo; Ecop president Donald Dee; Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry president John Ng; and Philippines Inc. president Miguel Varela. Also present were Alberto Fenix Jr. and Anna Marie Periquet, chair and president of the Aurelio Periquet Jr. Foundation, respectively.

FROM left: Jimmy Po, president of Globus Care Inc.; PCCI president Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr.; Anna Marie Periquet; DTI Secretary Mar Roxas; Sandy Prieto-Romualdez; Henry Lim Bon Liong; Peter Favila, Philippine Business Conference chair; Miguel Varela, PCCI Honorary chair; Ecop president Donald Dee; Benjamin Punongbayan, PCCI vice president; and Arthur Chung, chair of the 5th Aurelio Periquet Jr. Business Leadership Awards Organizing Committee.

STC ALUMNAE CONQUER FASHION RAMP

Meet Gertrude, doctor, Lani, lawyer, Eileen, corporate executive, Glenda, insurance consultant, Marjorie, accountant, and Becky, businesswoman. Besides being all members of St. Theresa's College Quezon City High School Batch '78, they carry the distinction of modeling the fashion creations of batchmate Delby Panaguiton-Bragais. These ladies participated in a 20-minute fashion show number—one of the highlights of the STCQC 2003 alumnae homecoming Jan. 25. Delby is a product of the New York Fashion Institute of Technology and has her shop, Northroad, located at the Edsa Shangrila Hotel. For complementing Delby's designs and completing their look, these Theresians want to thank Hairbytes for their hair and makeup and Rio for their fashion accessories. Shown, from left, are Lala Gonzales, Connie Cruz, Agnes Calleja, Tes Jaramillo, Ditas Martelino, Cecile Bautista, Marjorie Batoon, Yam dela Cruz, Delby Bragais, Wena de Leon, Glenda Alog, Divina Panaguition, Aleli Nuguid, Gertrude Reinoso, Luli Victor, Becky Chan, Nina Encarnacion, Bessie Rivera. At second row are Diana Prado, and Peewee Lapid, and at third row are Lani Somera and Eileen Araneta.

BITS Clips

Faraon alumni homecoming

THE FARAON Institute Class of 1978 will hold an alumni homecoming on Feb. 22 at Faraon Institute, school quadrangle. Roselindy Salguero Yamamoto will be the muse of class '78. For more details, call Marlisa Paderna Go at 0920-2411310.

DLSU-D stages religious concert

THE RELIGIOUS Education Department of De La Salle University-Dasmarinas (DLSU-D) stages a multimedia concert on the sacraments titled "RC3: Isang Pagdiriwang ng Buhay" on Feb. 21 at Palaruang La Salle. Aimed at propagating the Christian faith through inspirational music, the concert's proceeds will benefit the Formation Program for the Catechists and Lay Ministers of the Diocese of Imus, the Adult Catechism Program at Barangay Sta. Mercedes in Maragondon, Cavite and the Kuya Foundation for Street Children. For inquiries, call (046)416-4531 local 3112.

RTU grand alumni reunion

ALL ALUMNI of the Rizal Technological University (RTU), formerly Rizal Technological Colleges along Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City and Rainforest, Pasig are invited to come and renew friendships with their schoolmates at the 3rd grand alumni reunion. Venue is at Brown Villa, 10th floor, Manalo Street, Barangay Malinao, Pasig City on Feb. 22, 4 p.m. The RTU Grand Alumni Association Inc. launched the search for outstanding alumni 2003 of RTU, which will be proclaimed during the reunion. Send nominations to Jenny Gregorio at 642-7607, Ebeng Concepcion at 640-9913, and Vicky dela Cruz at 643-7827, 0919-2552704. For inquiries, call Tita Sarmiento 642-6153 or Tessa Llagas at 532-0654.

Concert Royals Martin and Pops:

Finally Back in Each Other's Arms

SMART is set to bring about a reunion which many thought would never happen again. Martin Nievera and Pops Fernandez, the Concert King and Queen of the Philippines, will be performing onstage together, for the first time in seven long years. As part of Amazing Rhythms: The SMART Concert Series, Martin and Pops will finally rekindle that old spark of romance, just in time for Valentine's.

After the historic simulcast during Martin's "Chasing Time: The XX'mas Concert" and Pops' "Pops in 2002" last December, the former couple thrilled fans in each concert venue as they sang a few songs together via video wall. This time they're going to be on the very same stage.

The first concert will be on February 15th at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu. Get a chance to win 2 FREE Tickets when you swap your non-SMART SIM to a SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM at any SMART Wireless Center or TSI Outlet in Cebu from February 1 to 12, 2003. Winners will be announced during the draw on February 12.

The historic Araneta Coliseum will host Martin and Pops on February 21, 22 and 28. Likewise you get a chance at two FREE tickets when you swap your non-SMART SIM to a SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM at any Metro Manila SMART Wireless Center from February 1 to 18, 2003. Keep an eye out for the draw date on February 19.

Finally, Expo Filipino in Clark Field, Pampanga will be the venue for the couple's March 1 concert. Secure a couple of FREE tickets for you and your special someone by swapping your non-SMART SIM to a SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM at SMART Wireless Centers in SM Pampanga or Robinsons Starmills from February 1 to 25, 2003. Who knows? Your name could be drawn on February 26, just in time for a perfect capper to the entire Love Month!

To get the chance to win free tickets to these fabulous concerts of loving and cooing, stay tuned with your favorite mobile services provider, SMART!

Only SMART can bring this momentous reunion together. With the widest range of services, Amazing Rhythms, The SMART Concert Series is just the latest way that SMART gives back to its audience. Martin, Pops, SMART. What more could you possibly ask for?

LCF to hold seminar on setting up a corporate foundation

THE LEAGUE of Corporate Foundation will conduct a training seminar on "How to Establish/Manage an Effective Corporate Foundation" on Friday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Bataan Room, 32/f Petron Megaplaza, 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City. Theme of seminar is: Doing Good and Doing it Well.

The training seminar is open to all companies engaged in social development work which are considering setting up their own corporate foundation.

The speakers are Vicky Garchitorena, president, Ayala Foundation and LCF chair, on Corporate Social Responsibility as a strategic management tool; Atty. Louie Pangilinan, president, Fort Bonifacio Development Foundation, on the legal requirements for corporate foundations; Bobby Calingo, executive director, Mirant Philippines Foundation, on financial sustainability and fund-raising; Nicole Tria Tirona, Andres Soriano Foundation, on writing project proposals; Fely Soledad, executive director, Philippine Council for NGO Certification, on the accreditation of NGOs; and Art Cariaga, LCF executive director, on the benchmarks for good corporate social responsibility practice.

The seminar will be keynoted during luncheon by Mr Santurnino G. Belen, chair, Bato-Balani Foundation and president, First Asia Venture Capital and Fastech Synergy Ltd.

Petron Foundation headed by executive director and LCF president Malu Emi is hosting the training seminar organized by the Training and Research Committee under the supervision of Dr. Kenneth Hartigan-Go, executive director, Zuellig Foundation.

Seminar fees are P1,000 each for LCF members and P2,000 each for non-LCF members. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Inquiries and reservations may be coursed through the LCF secretariat, 892-9189 and 892-9084. Please look for Art Cariaga or Pia Bernal.

Class 69 supports QCHS Alumni's outreach programs

RESPONDING positively to the on-going projects of Quezon City High School Alumni Association, Isidro C. Agdeppa Jr., Class 69, chair of the committee on membership and branch manager of Bank of the Philippine Islands (Blumentritt Branch) has formulated plans and programs aim to provide "basic needs not only for the children of poor alumni but also to urban poor citizen."

Agdeppa's expertise in business management is a big factor in convincing more members to attend the QCHS Alumni General Assembly Meeting to be held on April 5. Agdeppa laments, "We don't want our class to vanish, to be extinct. If some of our members are always lackadaisical, I am afraid our good memories and history in Quezon City High School will also be gone. If they are busy working abroad, we urge them to send food, medicine, clothes, or books to the association."

Agdeppa calls for more active participation of its members here and abroad because their assistance is urgently needed for "pro-poor projects such as feeding children, medical and dental mission." He has already requested the assistance of Class 69 members who regularly hold meetings (every 1st Saturday of the month). 8 a.m. at the Quezon City Memorial Circle, in front of Max Restaurant. QCHS alumni members can communicate Jose Inumerable, at 920-7997 / 415-8432, cell# 0917-6937524 or Jun Agdeppa at tel. 938-4951, 291-8849, email: lucia131252@yahoo.com or Sid Valencia at tel. no. 823-1813, cell# 0918-504-7314, email: growlandphils@yahoo.com.

PANABENGA VIA CAUSEWAY

Panabenga is the time of '10,000 flowers a-blooming' in the City of Pines, Baguio City. Always ready to bring people where the cultural happenings are, Causeway Tours now offers two days of memorable enjoyment for all who wish to witness and take part in this colorful weeklong flower festival. Causeway schedules its tour on Feb. 22 and 23, in time for the festival's main attraction, the floral parade with bands, showcasing the cultural wealth of the different Cordillera ethnic groups and culminating in mass street dancing on Session Road. There's also a bonus side trip to Camp John Hay for a glimpse of the floral exhibitions and competitions in landscaping and flower arrangement. Those wishing to enjoy the City of Pines can call Causeway Tours at 851-7294 or 0916-3963963.

MOCHA BLENDS INAUGURATES 5 OUTLETS

Mocha Blends, a new coffee shop chain, inaugurated its first five outlets simultaneously last Jan. 30. The coffee shops are located in Circle C-Congressional Ave., Robinsons Metro East, SM Mega Mall, Robinsons Galleria and Tomas Morato Ave. Photo shows Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. (center), leading a ceremonial coffee toast at the Morato outlet. With Lorenzo are Mocha Blends president Florante dela Cruz (left) and consultant-master roaster Paul Manasis of Mocha Coffee Ltd. of Australia. The chain is eyeing 50 outlets this year to help revitalize the local coffee industry and provide additional livelihood to people.

Canlubang all set for PTC's whackin'

THE PHILIPPINE Tourism Cup (PTC) whacks its way to Canlubang Golf and Country Club on Feb. 14 and 15 as it continues on its second qualifying round series in Southern Tagalog. Tee-off time is at 7 a.m. Doing the ceremonial tee are DOT and Canlubang officials.

Next leg will be in Riviera Golf and Country Club on Feb. 21 and 22 followed by Club Malarayat on Feb. 28 to March 1, Eagle Ridge on March 21 and 22. The Orchard on March 28 and 29 and East Ridge on April 4 and 5.

"The Philippine Tourism Cup is our way of showing to the world that we do have world-class golf courses and golfers as well." Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon said. The Philippine Tourism Cup Executive Committee headed by Assistant Secretary Salvador D. Sarabia Jr. has been directed to exert relentless efforts in ensuring the success of the year-round government initiated golf tournament.

The tournament is open to all local and international amateur players in class A, B and C for men and class A and B in ladies division. The tournament format is a team competition using the Stableford system of scoring. Each team will be composed of four members with the best three scores to counts. Individual participation will be classified under the Guest Division with a tournament fee pegged at P600/per and team participation fee is P2,400/per exclusive of green fee and caddy fee.

Interested participants may register at the Philippine Tourism Cup secretariat office at 536-1133, 523-8411 to 20 loc. 183/200.

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"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
Psalm 21:15

"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." — **John 3:16**

FLORENCIO B. PEÑALOZA, JR.

of San Pablo City

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 07, 2003 at the age of 62.

He is survived by his loving wife **Maripaz**; children **Armand** and **Badette**, **Chickay** and **Ome**, **Arnel**, **Alan**, **Billet**, and grandchildren, brothers and sisters **Amelia**, **Ando** and **Priscilla**, **Marina**, **Emma**, **Niceno** and **Dolly**.

His remains will arrive from Chicago, Illinois at 11p.m. on February 15 and will lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Quezon City.

Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

DR. FABIAN L. MEDINA

Peacefully passed away
on February 11, 2003 at the age of 77.

His wife **EDITA**; together with children **Lilian**, **Alan**, **Stanley**, **Aida**, and **Patrick**; request the pious readers, especially their relatives and friends, to join them in praying for his eternal bliss in heaven.

His body lies in state at the Mt. Carmel Church, Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City.

A Mass will be celebrated at the Mount Carmel Chapel at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, the 16th of February, 2003. Burial will follow at the Calamba Catholic Cemetery, Calamba City, Laguna.

"In Christ all shall be made alive...."
Corinthians 15:22

Liberata Navarro Juaño

Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 12, 2003
at the age of 77.

Her children **Eva** and **Noel**, **Cyd** and **Gil**, **Kim** and **Gil**, **Joel** and **Elena**, **Myra** and **Gerry**, and her grandchildren **Brian**, **Camille**, **Claudine**, **Gillian**, **Iman**, **Terence**, **Michael**, **Raphael**, **Gabriel**, **Jhoma**, **Mara**, **Josh**, **Micki** and **Jarrod** mourn her passing away but celebrate her eternal rest with the Lord.

Her remains lie in state at Faith Chapel in Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City on Sunday, February 16, 2003 after the Mass.

"From darkness let the light shine!"
Genesis 1:3

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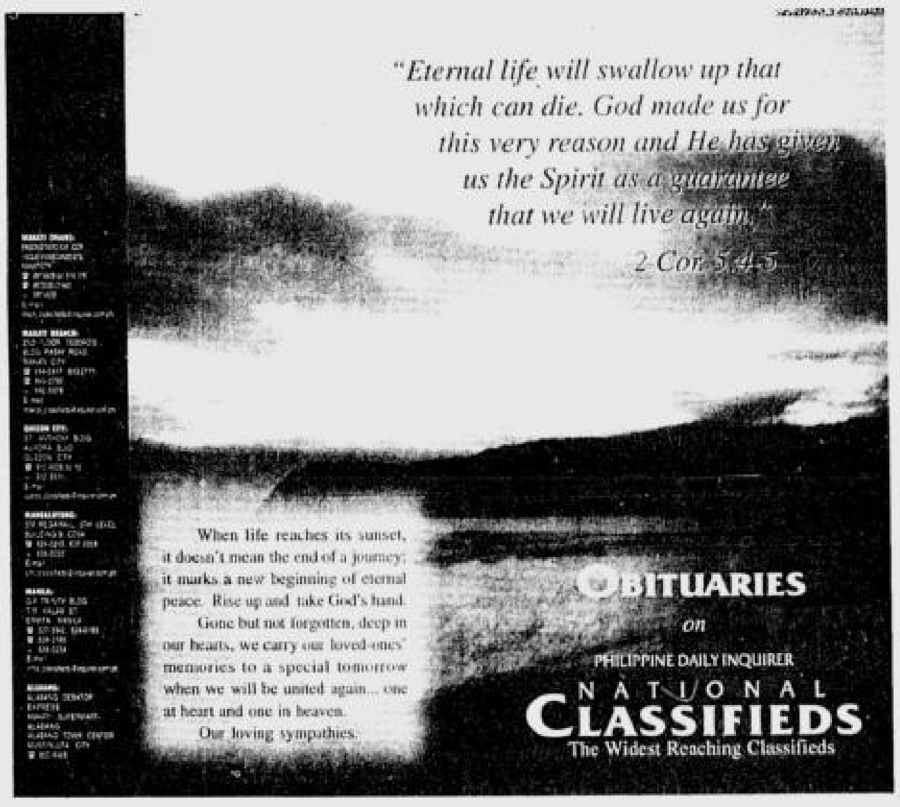
"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5
When life reaches its sunset, it doesn't mean the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning of eternal peace. Rise up and take God's hand.
Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, we carry our loved-ones' memories to a special tomorrow when we will be united again... one at heart and one in heaven.
Our loving sympathies.
OBITUARIES
on
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Yesterday, we published an obituary about the death of a person by the name of **PHILIP G. LO**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Coast Pacific Manufacturing Corporation, and whose remains lie in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes in Cebu City.

We have been informed that no person by that name lies in state at the said funeral house.

The information stated in the obituary was provided by the advertiser who represented herself as an employee of Coast Pacific Manufacturing Corporation and presented a copy of the death certificate of a certain Philip G. Lo.

No malice or ill-will was intended by the Inquirer in yesterday's obituary.

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MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

February 13, 2003

NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, as amended, in relation to CMO 36-2001, there will be a **SPECIAL PUBLIC AUCTION SALE** to be conducted at the Manila International Container Port on February 18, 2003 of the hereunder article in lot. Said goods shall be available for public viewing on February 17, 2003. For further inquiry, please contact MR. ISIDRO A. PRE, Chief, ACDD, Telephone Numbers 247-09-77 and 245-41-01 local 2283.

In the event of a failed bidding, for want of bidders or lack of an acceptable bid, the unsold lots shall be re-auctioned the next succeeding business day at the floor price reduced by 20%.

Lot No. 092A-02 VARIOUS CONSIGNEES S.I. Nos. 07-02, 08-02, 10-02 and 11-02 (N.H.) 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is' 'Proceeds Held in Trust.' Floor Price: Php 139,200.00	116 Bags, 50 kgs./bag Premium Rice (Excess of Lot No. 092-02 of Auction Sale held on January 15, 2003.) Note: Only bidders with NFA Licenses will be allowed to participate. Location: North Harbor
Lot No. 003-03 VARIOUS CONSIGNEES S.I. No. 09-02 (N.H.) 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is' 'Proceeds Held in Trust.' Floor Price: Php4,305,000.00	2,460 Bags, 50 kgs./bag Premium Rice Note: Only bidders with NFA Licenses will be allowed to participate. Location: North Harbor, 6 x 20' Containers

Registration Fee	-	Php2,000.00
Cash Bond	-	Php20,000.00
Payment	-	50% downpayment and the remaining balance payable within forty-eight (48) hours for the winning bidder.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME**
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Regional Office No. IV-B invites Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to prequalify and bid for services to implement community-organizing work in the following bays under the Income Diversification Component of the Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP).

BAY	PROVINCE	MUNICIPALITY
Puerto Princesa Bay	Palawan	Puerto Princesa City

NGOs that are to be considered for the pre-qualification preferably should have at least five (5) years relevant experience on community organizing for livelihood development and coastal resource management in the provinces and areas mentioned above.

The general scope of work involves organization work to establish community-based organizations; continuing assistance to the community organizations to build up membership and develop leadership and capability in undertaking coastal resource management and micro-enterprise activities; and assistance in FRMP implementation at the local levels.

Among the specific activities to be undertaken by the selected NGO includes:

1. Strengthening of the fisherfolk associations and other self-help groups in the coastal communities to engage in income diversification and micro enterprise activities;
2. Initiation of primary cooperatives to essentially become multi-purpose cooperatives, giving more attention to complementation of water-based and land-based activities.
3. Assist BFAR in the conduct of education and training that is focused in mobilizing the organizational capability of their cooperatives to access external opportunities and potentials towards empowerment;
4. Assist BFAR in the conduct of LGU planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of various CRM concepts and best practices; and: institutionalization of such in the local development plans; and
5. Continue unfinished scope of work by the previous contracted NGO in the said Bay.

Interested NGOs must submit notarized pre-qualification statements together with the required documents to the BFAR Regional Office IV-B which have jurisdiction over the areas where they are interested in working. Documents must be properly "tabbed" to correspond with each pre-qualification requirement and should be received not later than 5:00 PM on February 28, 2003. Attention: The Chairpeson, Prequalification, Evaluation and Awards Committee. Forms for prequalification and list of required documents may be obtained from the BFAR Regional Office No. IV-B.

OIC-REGIONAL DIRECTOR VIRGILIO A. ALFORQUE
ADDRESS: 1st Flr., ICC Bldg., NIA Road, NIA Compound,
EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City
CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS: 928-2015 (Telefax);
9296071 to 79 local 174.

BFAR Regional Office IV-B reserves the right to reject any or all bids as well as to waive any defect or informality in the submitted bid documents. It also reserves the prerogative to accept any bid it may consider as most responsive and advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **VIRGILIO A. ALFORQUE**
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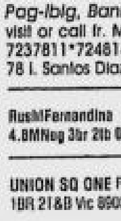

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TAAL Btngs 200m from Diversion Rd LA6794m² P186/m² Vic 8903461 loc. 27

CAVITE

TAGAYTAY SOUTHRIDGE
NR. CLUBHSE 240m²
PALLAS ATHENA, IMUS
Adj. Lots 261m² & 160m²
Tel. # 641-3812 • 641-3486

VALENZUELA

RUSH!! 150m² nr church mrkt 8009718 ; 09193384431 Lyn

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

PASIG

Ortigas Ave., Pasig City

2 bedroom condo unit in a Mediterranean setting with integrated commercial and recreation complex for as low as

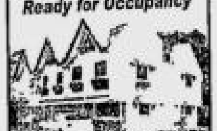
P12.5T/mo.

656 1882 / 1706

HOUSE & LOT

CAVITE

Why Rent??? Buy Now!!! Ready for Occupancy



RSG Gueventhomes
Near SM-Bacoor
D/P 12 months to pay
Inhouse; Pag-ibig;GSIS; SSS or Provident
Tels. 873-5508 • 873-5509
Cel.: (0918) 904-8230
BROKERS / AGENTS WELCOME

LOT

PROVINCIAL

TAGAYTAY COUNTRY HOMES 180m² P3,500/m² Vic Gigie 8903461 loc. 27/25

OFFICE SPACE

MKT OFC/CONDO 4 SALE w/ Parking 308 & 159 sqm T8192056/8130080/89 Saly

BUSINESS SPACE

700m² Res or Industry W. Capitol 0917-4149898

MEMORIAL LOT

BNEW ANTIPOLO
Townhomes, 2 or 3BR, 2T&B, near TownProper, with amenities•PROMO 10%DP SEE UNITS to APPRECIATE! Call LYN (02)728-8049

Pre-Need Plan cremation/mem service P3,514/s.annual w/insurance, earn money back P34,120 (Flor) 0917-8485621

FARM/FISHPEN/ RAWLANDS

1.3HA RICEFIELD CANAMAN CAM.SUR 6460768 PERLA

SAN MIGUEL LA4000m² P250/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

TAAL Btngs 200m from Diversion Rd LA6794m² P186/m² Vic 8903461 loc. 27

RESORT

Calaca, Bats 1ha. w/ 2New Resort Haus, 1Caretaker Haus Strong Flowing Water w/ Tel. Line Sale P35M Call 361-9953 / 364-6696

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

COMMERCIAL/ RESIDENTIAL

TAGUIG

TAGUIG MANALAC SUBD. OFFICE CONDO 5473471

HOUSE

PASIG

Bo. Kapitolyo Hse for Rent 5BR, 5TB, 4 Car Grge 2 Water Tanks w/Pumps, New Paint Ofc/Res Use Call 8070644/45 0916-4971180

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

One BEATRIZ Tower
1st Class COMM.-OFFICE RES'L CONDO
AURORA /LAUAN ST., PROJ. 3, Q.C.

READY FOR OCCUPANCY
FOR SALE OR LEASE

NEAR ATENEO • UP • MIRIAM • KOSTKA • PSBA • NCBA
1st CLASS AMENITIES
R-Top S. Pool, Gym, Sauna & Etc.
W/ X'LENT VIEW 360°
MOVE-IN FOR
ONLY 10% DP
TO SEE... IS TO BELIEVE
For INQUIRIES & CONDO TEL RESERVATIONS CALL:
MASTER C RE-DE, INC.
TEL# 913-5223/921-4883
922-4464/913-7632

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

BURGUNDY
CORPORATE TOWER

LEASE TO OWN UNITS AVAILABLE!!!
READY FOR OCCUPANCY
252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., near corner Ayala Ave.,
HURRY, A FEW UNITS LEFT!!!
894-4516/5048
0916-4599639/0917-9853661

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

QUEZON CITY

5BR 5TB 1CG Pr7 nr SM Cty Call Ana or Aida 3713887 /3713837/3713066

CONDO/TWNHSE

KALOOCAN

NEW 1BR•2BR COM'L
CLINIC•OFFICE•P6.5Tup
NO ASSOCIATION DUES•NO RENT increase for 2yrs. • with tel & cable lines #162 P. Jacinto cor. #39 Biglang Awa Caloocan • Call Zeny • 323-0175 Tintin • 527-7616

MAKATI

SALCEDO REMODELED 1BR MUST SEE NR MKT SPORT 5473471

• THREE SALCEDO PLACE •
Unit 2004
2BR Fully Furnished
CALL: Myrna 893-1043

QUEZON CITY

5BR 5TB 1CG Pr7 nr SM Cty Call Ana or Aida 3713887 /3713837/3713066

SAN JUAN

Grnhills Stu FF 11T 9299835

APARTMENT

MAKATI

2BR 2TB 899-2148•5227127

MANILA

967-A Dolores St Malate P10T T#5248325

MANDALUYONG

3BR Apt. 12T Near EDSA Central / Shangri-La 533-5101

QUEZON CITY

15T 2br 2tb w/grge nr Bayani St & Araneta Ave 7160997

1BR Nr UP/Estwd 6815834

5BR 5TB 1CG Pr7 nr SM Cty Call Ana or Aida 3713887 /3713837/3713066

Cubao P3.5 std Lady 4381400

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

QUEZON CITY

•P4.8T STUDIO T-926-7383

WAREHOUSE/ FACTORY

53 GOV PASCUAL WHSE 3610652

ROOM & BOARD

BUENDIA PASAY 8345973 M/F 1 PERSON ONLY FURN FREE LIGHT-WATER P3,000MO

New Ladies Dorm U-Belt Mla Accept Reviewees T-6810992

BEDSPACE

M/F Pasay 5500254 Robert

Resdn'l/Furnish 2PerRm Male Single Bed T897-3770

RM/Bedspace 899-2148•5227127

BUSINESS RENTAL

524 EDSA KALOOKAN 3610652

ANNAPOLIS GHLS
PLATINUM 2000
192sqm. GRD FLR/COMM'L
TEL.367-7222/456-4966

COMML SPACE
QUIRINO HI-WAY
BESIDE MERCURY DRUG
TEL.367-7222/456-4966

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

FINANCING-EASY FAST VERY PRIVATE CONVENIENT H/L Business Personal Gigie/Ernie 8903461 loc. 25/23

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

CONDO/TWHSE/ FOR SALE/RENT

Mkti Condo Sale/Rent Crown Tower de la Costa 2BR 2TB 150Sqm Md Rm TB 1 Pkg New 2TB Cabinets LEO 09175286515 RUSH

Ocean Tower, Roxas Blvd. 130 sqm, 3BR, 3TB, Maid. 6.8M/40T 09175292250

ONGPIN COR. GANDARA ST TEL# 734-25-03/04

RIZAL

BUNG w/gar Emerald Cainta 8979631 • 2910285 • 8979541

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

TOYOTA

81LC DSL 180T 8974641

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

Starex MB100 Coaster Bus • Call 631-3496

ABC CARS/VANS
NEW MODEL ALL BRANDS
SELFDRIVE OR WITH DRIVER
MANILA 536-8822 • 303-9789
TIMOG Q.C. 426-2276 • 426-4084

A.TOYCO-UDRIVE OR W/ DRIVER CAR/VANS RENTALS 800-6595

CAR VANS 410-0495

★Vans Coaster Bus 440-9171

Grandia L3 Preglo 825-4058

HI-ACE L300 4561218 / 9296250

SELFDRIVE W/DRIVER CARS VANS REVO COASTER BUS 8908667 • 8908668 • 8908669

MARIAN 8969956 CARS CSTER VANS BRDAL

P000/L3 9130710/4333602

REVO w/driver 9272021

SECRETARY / RECEPTIONIST
- ☐ College graduate, Female, Single
- ☐ Computer literate
- ☐ Attractive with pleasing personality

Bring resumé & transcript of records.
Apply in person at:
Rm.319 Merald Bldg.
Muralla St., Intramuros, Manila
Contact Gerry - 0918-9398090

FOR LEASE
"PAYANIG" property 10,000 to 40,000 sq. meters located along MERALCO and Julia Vargas Avenues, Ortigas Commercial Center, Brgy. Ugong, Pasig City.

For more details please contact Lyn Manalo or Primy Millado at Tel. Nos. **726-5081** to **89** or **727-3372.**

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

STAREX MB HIACE 827-6605

MYATT
RENT-A-CAR
LOW RATES BRAND NEW CAR VANS W/ OR W/O DRIVER
CALL: 750-2282; 844-6800

CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

1.5 % EasyCarLoan 4000166 -67

1.5% FAST CAR LOAN 7262780

1.5% FAST CAR LOAN 6560140

2% w/o Taking Car 8966633

2% w/o Taking Car 7228942/43

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BILLIARDS

22T New Complt SR Impld 7767507

BILLIARDS P30/33/36/38T A1 Qlty Bnew 8014494/8020566

ELECTRONIC & INDUSTRIAL EQUIP

GILBARCO FUEL DISP-DUAL Recon-Mech P125T★ Digital P135T★ DREW 09189042083

HONDA 3KVA 15T 8974641 ROBIN 1.5KVA 8T 8974641

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

YAMAHA GRAND & UPRIGHT
ELITE PIANO CENTER
Almost New:TERMS-7213124

OTHER EQUIPMENT

FOODWARMER SS8/0 8959031

PETS

CHINESE SHARPEIS 3725231

DOG TRAINER 4528681

Dog Training VCDs P200each 4135809 / 09197959939

HUSKY 0920-4254118

PHIL. DOG SCHOOL
Trains Dogs w/No Harsh Treatment and Using Only K9 Psychology
Courses Offered: Obedience Correction of Bad Habits Protection Training
721-3736, 0917-8489308

PITBULL PUPS W/ SHOTS T6553521

Pure-breed Shih Tsu Female Pups Champion Line w/papers 5365313 8246018 09196244610

WANTED TO BUY

DEFECT TV/A'CON 7326865

Used Furnitures, Appliances, Pocket Books, Long Playing Records Decors etc. 647-0240

WANTED
FINE ARTS STUDENT
for a contractual job.
Call Linda
Tel. 815-3485 • 840-3970 • 09196655062

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

WANTED TO BUY

ANY ROLEX
and Other Swiss Watches
Buy / Sell / Pawn / Repair
Tel# 804-0484 • 834-2886

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Other WATCHES, BEST PRICE
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ROLEX
5646593 5897041
5633742 0917-8473744

WE BUY GOLD
HIGHEST PRICE
CALL: 8390004 8390060

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

ARCHITECT w/ or w/o exp Mail Biodata w/ photo 76 Don Manuel Agregado St SMH,QC

BEAUTY CONSULTANT 527-1590

FEMALE SECRETARY Executive Assistant, strong English, Computer skills, open personality, Php12,000 per mo. to start-up to Php30,000 90days work in Mkti. Fax resume to Mr. Rose 897-7300

MAIDS LOW OFFICE FEE QUICK REPLACEMENT 5506459

MALE/FEMALE

URGENT OFC Staff/Personnel 18/45 w/w/o exp Start asap Direct Hire 4752637 CECIL

Earn as much as 7 figures a year!
Attend our free seminars at
SM MANILA SM SOUTHMALL SM BACOOR
PACIFIC MALL (LEGAZPI)
ALABANG & SAN PEDRO
Join us. We're the Largest!
PHILAMLIFE-ANTONIO
Tel.8928970 Cell 09178433758

Franchise Company needs Expat executive type to manage & sell franchised chain of clinics throughout Philppines. Strong English and marketing background a must. Php 50,000.00 per month plus bonuses and expenses. Fax resume to Mr. Franco 897-7300

FREE Care Giver Seminar 4043528 5538009

HAIRDRESSER SECRETARY
Call 895-6031 Loc 2011

★CANADA/USA★
Immigration Guidebook
8175511/8944950/5756429

★Ofc Staff 18/30yr w/w/out exp Start ASAP 9168371 DAN★

★OfcStaff/Personnel★
18-45yo w/wo exp Start ASAP Direct Hire 9121488 Mr Garcia

HRD Staff 0916-7054572Ness

HRD STAFF 09196659076 LEAH

Sweet Nothings...
Post Valentine Greetings

Sweet Julia321...

every now and then,
we find
a special friend,
remember me
this way.

CAS-HEART

Lene
Just want to
share to everybody
the true happiness I found
in you!
I love you Baby!
Happy Valentine!
- Bon

Sweetie,
Our Love has seen many moods &
countless seasons you know better
than anyone the ups & downs I've
been through.
Thanks for always being
there. Love you
for keeps.
Michelle

*Elson may this be
the first of many
V-days to come
—love your Darling
—oOo—
Happy Valentine's Day
to E: Trinity
– From ur fans*

To Anthony my L&B3.
I can't find any words to express
my thanks to you for loving me so
much.
Happy Valentine's Day!
always,
Iris & your baby

To Ellen
My life wouldn't be
complete without you in it.
Happy Valentine
Love,
Andrei

*To my only love
on Valentines, there's no other
more than you.
Nini,
Happy Anniversary*
— Benjie

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

HRD/OfcStaff09205765388Dang

HRDSTAFF JERS 09196584845

MERCHANDISERS 527-1590

Ofc Staff / HRD Start ASAP w/ Hi Salary 7279971 Mr. Bean

OFC STAFF 18-45 M/F Coll. Grad/ Level w/-or w/ o exp Call SHIE # 437-0454

OFCSTF LEAH 09193352395

OFFICE STAFF 09192535623 GLENDA

WANTED MED TECH, UTZ, & X-RAY TECH. Apply at the 171 4th Ave. GP Cal. City, Perlas Polyclinic, Look for Ms. Onor Angeles

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

CAREGIVER TRNG 5276418

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late WENCESLAO C. MALLARI has been extrajudicially settled with waiver of share among his heirs as per Doc. 602, Page 181, Book VII, Series of 2003, before Atty. Ricardo Q. Bundalian, Notary Public, Paranaque City.
(PDI-Feb.15,22&Mar.1, 2003)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that S2 LICENSE NO. 4254R002655 issued to DR. RICARDO L. JOCSON on March 21,2000.

Notice is given for the loss of S2IDCard#10394R01-598 under the name of Carolyn A. Butler.
(PDI-Feb. 15, 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

B/SELL EDUC'L PLAN 8061574

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION BOARD
Department of Labor and Employment
Intramuros, Manila

11 February 2003

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

The National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) invites all interested and accredited IT service agency to pre-qualify and submit sealed bid on **March 14, 2003**, 2:30 p.m. for the maintenance of the following IT equipment:

8	units	LAPTOP
2	units	SERVER
24	units	DESKTOP COMPUTER
34	units	PRINTER
1	unit	SCANNER
18	units	UPS

Pre-qualification requirements may be obtained at the Office of the PBAC Chairman, LMCD, NCMB, G/F, DOLE Building, Intramuros, Manila from February 17-20, 2003. .

Bidder's Bond is required equivalent 2.5% of Bid in Cash/Manager's Check/GSIS Surety (original).

The NCMB have the right to reject any or all bids to waive any informality or defects therein, or accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the government.

For inquiries, please contact the following telephone numbers: 527-9806/338-9545.

(Sgd.) **RACHEL E. ANGELES**
BAC, Chairman

(PDI - Feb. 13, 14 & 15, 2003)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the Public that
GO MANPOWER RESOURCES INC.
under the Proprietorship of
FREDELINA S. D'SOUZA
is applying for its License at POEA.

Written below are the following members of the Board and Directors:

1) **Fredelina S. D'Souza** – *President*
2) **Edwin D'Souza** – *Director*
3) **Dorotea O. Samson** – *Director*
4) **Manuel C. Samson** – *Secretary*
5) **Froilan Silvestre** – *Treasurer*

(PDI-Feb. 15, 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

B/SELL FULLY PD EDUC PLAN 780-0106 / 0917-7939632

Calling of entpreneurs/networkers 4 partime/fulltime basis. A gud compensation pckge + trvel incntives awaits! Cel/txt 09169783188 •09169787468

EARN Fr Home P/F Time 8370008

•TRVL N WORK FR HOME• 8531000 0917-8901861I travelandworkfromhome.com

EARN THRU PHONE 8905632

Infant&Kidwear 09193952974

Internet Cards TRI-ISYS 35% Blast39% Pacific40% Infocom 33% I-Tipid32% Gas29% 255-2608

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

JUICE DRINK MAKING BUSINESS FREE TRAINING, RAW MATLS AVAILABLE 2554643 25376171

Noritake
BODEGA SALE
60% OFF
Factory Seconds on Chinawares / Decorated / Plain White until Feb. 16
Metro Mla: 18 Panay Ave QC Tel. 3730814 /(0917)8400026
Pampanga: DFS DutyFree Shop Clarkfield, Angeles
Open on Sat. / Sun. Hurry!!!

PART-TIME BUSINESS 0918-9441238

SAN BEDA GRAND ALUMNI HOMECOMING 2003
(Golden and Silver Jubilarians: HS '53 and HS '78)
"Hinahanap-hanap kita, San Beda,
... I'm Coming Home."
Saturday, February 22, 2003, 4:00 p.m.
San Beda College
Mendiola, Manila
Contact the Secretariat at (63-2) 533-4157 to 60

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
METRO MANILA
Welfareville Compound, Brgy. Addition Hills
Mandaluyong City
Tel. No. 535-4521 or 535-4529

SENTRONG SIGLA

February 10, 2003

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
CHD-MM BAC-ITB NO. 2003-01

The Department of Health-Center for Health Development-Metro Manila (CHD-MM) invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following, chargeable against GOP funds:

1. **Drugs & Medicines**
2. **Medical, Environmental, Surgical & Laboratory Supplies**

Only duly accredited suppliers/manufacturers/distributors as certified by the Suppliers Accreditation Committees for Drugs and Medicines and for Medical, Environmental, Surgical and Laboratory Supplies and Materials of the Department of Health are qualified to participate in this bidding.

Bidding documents can be secured from Ms. Elenita S. Esmero, at Bldg. 1, 2/F Infectious Disease Cluster Office or Ms. Arabella T. Pineda at Bldg. 1, 1/F, Local Health Assistance Division (LHAD) Office, CHD-MM, Welfareville Cmpd., Brgy. Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS, Philippine Currency (P500.00).

Schedule of Activities

a)	**Issuance of Bid Documents**	February 18-28, 2003 (9:00 AM - 2:00 PM) Building 1, 2/F, Infectious Disease Cluster Officer Building 1, 1/F, LHAD Office
b)	**Submission of Eligibility Requirements**	March 4-6, 2003 (9:00 AM - 12:00 NN) Conference Rm. 2, Training Bldg.
c)	**Pre-bid Conference**	March 10, 2003 (9:00 AM - 12:00 NN) Medical, Environmental, Surgical and Laboratory Supplies March 10, 2003 (1:30 - 3:00 PM) Drugs & Medicines Amphitheatre, Training Building
d)	**Submission and Opening of Sealed Bids**	March 26, 2003 (8:00 - 9:00 AM) Medical, Environmental, Surgical and Laboratory Supplies Conference Room 1, Training Building. March 26, 2003 (9:00 - 10:00 AM) Drugs & Medicines Amphitheatre, Training Building

All activities will be held in CHD-MM, Welfareville Compound, Brgy. Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City.

For further information contact the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) secretariat c/o Ms. Arabella T. Pineda at tel. no. **535-4529** (Drugs & Medicines), or Ms. Elenita Esmero at tel. nos. **535-4521** or **718-3097** (Medical, Environmental, Surgical & Laboratory Supplies).

The BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids and to annul the bidding process anytime prior to the award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the CHD-MM's action.

(Sgd.) **DAVID J. LOZADA, JR., MD, MPA, CESO III**
Director IV, CHD-MM

(PDI - Feb. 15 & 22, 2003)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The National Housing Authority is inviting *Offers to Purchase* by way of sealed bids the following properties on *"As Is–Where Is"* basis

I. FIRST TENDER

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE/ SQ. METER	TERMS
001-013	13 commercial lots, 201.5 to 322 sqm. With TCTs	Vista del Rio Subd. Brgy. Alimanao Penablanca, Cagayan	1,300.00 to 1,500.00	Cash
014-023	10 commercial lots, 303 to 506 sqm. With TCTs	Cancabato Villa Subd. Brgy. San Jose Tacloban City	1,300.00 to 1,500.00	Cash

II. SECOND TENDER

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE/ SQ. METER	TERMS
024	104.80 hectare property inclusive of 1,843 row-houses With TCTs	NHA-Calauan Housing Project Brgys. Dayap & Santo Tomas, Calauan, Laguna	1 Billion	Cash "Lock-Stock & Barrel"

Bidding Materials can be secured for a non-refundable fee of *PhP200.00* from the ***Commercial & Industrial Estates Department (CIED)***, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Quezon City and Project Offices mentioned below. For inquiry, please call ***Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos, Manager, Sales Div., CIED*** (for all properties) or ***Arch. Susana V. Nonato, DAMO-SLB*** (for Calauan property) at the following Tel. Nos. ***CIED: (02) 923-0390, (02) 928-4561 local 302 & 303; SLB: (02) 922-9820; (02) 922-3319; (02) 928-4561 local 501 & 506.***

SCHEDULE	Calauan, Laguna	Cagayan	Tacloban
A. Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements	Feb. 13 to Feb. 17, 2003 until 5 pm CIED, Mezzanine Flr. NHA Bldg.	Feb. 24 to Mar. 5, 2003 until 5 pm NHA Reg. Off. II Sunshine Valley Homes, Penguo-Ruyu, Tuguegarao	Mar. 10 to Mar. 19, 2003 until 5 pm NHA-Leyte Proj. Off. Calnapowan Rd. Sagkahan Dist. Tacloban City
B. Pre-Bid Conference	Feb. 17, 2003 10 am Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Bldg.	Mar. 5, 2003 NHA Reg. Off. II 2:30 pm	Mar. 19, 2003 NHA Leyte Project Off.
C. Submission of Sealed Bids	Feb. 21, 2003 9 am to 12 nn Operations Center	Mar. 7, 2003 8 to 10 am NHA Reg. Off. II	Mar. 21, 2003 8 to 10 am NHA Leyte Proj. Off.
D. Opening of Sealed Bids	Feb. 21, 2003 1:30 pm Operations Center	Mar. 7, 2003 10:30 am NHA Reg. Off. II	Mar. 21, 2003 10:30 am NHA Leyte Proj. Off.

The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all offers or any part thereof or to *waive* any required formalities and *accept* offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **JOSEPH PETER S. SISON**
Assistant General Manager

(PDI–Feb. 12 & 15, 2003)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Date: January 29, 2003
Reference No.:

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. Contract . SPO1.CB.Lr-0323 - Construction and Installation of 230 & 69 kV Substation Equipment for Cabanatuan Substation
2. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all construction plant, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except for materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), constructing complete the 230 & 69 kV Substation.
3. Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is P41,412,800.00 from Internal Cash Generation.
4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract to be bid/project with the following License and Registration Particulars as specified in the Eligibility Documents:
   License: "Category AA" - Specialty: Electrical Works
   Registration: "At Least Large A - Specialty: Electrical Works"
5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.
6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for issuance on **February 10, 2003** at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Second Floor, Building No. 2, NPC-OBC, National Transmission Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No. 921-2308 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P800.00 per copy.
7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before **February 23, 2003** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/ screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
   - Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   - Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   - Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   - Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by the CIAP;
   - Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;
   - Contractor's License
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **W. SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 12, 15 & 18, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Insurance Commission
1071 United Nations Avenue, Manila 1000
Tel. No. 523-84-61 to 70
Fax No. 5221434
E-mail: oic@i-manila.com.ph

The INSURANCE COMMISSION (IC) is inviting all prospective INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTIONS PROVIDERS to submit an integrated solutions proposal for the requirements of the IC. The solutions should include the following only:

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- Workstations; and
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The IC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Government. IC assumed no obligation for whatever loses that might be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bids.

For more information, please see or call the BUDGET DIVISION, 2nd Floor, Insurance Commission, United Nations Avenue, Manila at 524-6097.

Interested bidders may acquire the PREQUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS from the 17th of February 2003 until the 19th of February 2003 at the same office between 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. only. The submission of prequalification documents shall be on or before the **25th of February 2003** by **5:00 p.m.** at the said office. Only prequalified bidders will be informed in writing to purchase the REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL/TERMS OF REFERENCE for the computing requirements of the agency.

THE COMMISSIONER
INSURANCE COMMISSION

SCIENCE/HEALTH
E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang ● Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

PHENYLPROPANOLAMINE

The controversial PPA in medicines

By Charles E. Buban

SHOULD the Philippines ban a drug ingredient the US Food and Drug Administration has already warned its consumers not to use?

The ingredient, called phenylpropanolamine, or PPA, is found in dozens of over-the-counter cough and cold medicines which are still being sold here in the country despite a US FDA warning 27 months ago for American consumers to stop taking them.

There is fear that PPA might be linked to hemorrhagic strokes, or bleeding in the brain, a not-so-common type of stroke that is often deadly or can leave survivors disabled.

But Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, early this month, assured the public that medical products containing PPA are safe.

"There have never been any documented cases of strokes involving Filipinos taking cough or cold medicines which contain PPA," Dayrit had said.

The secretary's assurance came after Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla warned the public in January against taking medicines that contain PPA. Remulla suggested local drug companies pull out their PPA-containing products from the market.

Dayrit, however, said fears of the congressman "hold true for all medicines, such as aspirin, which have adverse effects when taken above the recommended dosage."

Yale study

The congressman based his warning on studies his office had received about the supposed risks of PPA.

One particular study, conducted by Yale University School of Medicine, linked PPA to the incidence of hemorrhagic stroke in women. Results of the five-year research were published in the New England Journal of Medicine in November 2000.

Although the first evidence that PPA could be linked with increased stroke risk surfaced more than 20 years ago, it was the Yale study that made the most impact.

The study found that women aged 18 to 49 who took appetite suppressants containing PPA were 16 times more likely to have a hemorrhagic stroke than other women.

It also found that women who used cold or cough remedies containing PPA for the first time had a threefold increased risk of hemorrhagic stroke.

The study, however, reported no increased risk of stroke in men using these cough or cold remedies; and none of the men who participated in the study was taking appetite suppressants.

The researchers concluded that PPA, if taken in high dosage, could induce hemorrhagic stroke.

From this study, the US FDA concluded there was no way to predict who was most at risk from using PPA and declared that cold and cough relief was not enough of a benefit to incur the risk of stroke.

The FDA told consumers to check the labels of the cold and cough medicines they were taking to determine if these contained PPA. If they did, the FDA said consumers must stop using them.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

BFAD finding

In contrast, the Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs had ruled that PPA was safe and could be sold in the country, provided that products containing 25 to 50 milligrams of the substance were classified as prescription drugs.

Drugs with 50 mg or more of PPA could no longer be registered with the BFAD.

The BFAD cited some "methodological flaws" in the Yale study, and said the risk for stroke was probably associated with PPA in appetite suppressants, where PPA doses went as high as 75 to 150 mg.

Apart from being a nasal decongestant to relieve stuffy nose or sinus congestion, PPA is used in some weight control drugs because it can control appetite.

None of these appetite suppressants, however, have been approved for sale in the Philippines.

Remulla now plans to ask the House committee on dangerous drugs to investigate the continued sale of medicines containing PPA.

Watermelons good for you, say experts

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Watermelons, with their high fiber and vitamin A content, are good for one's health.

And according to the National Nutrition Council (NNC), the red variety has more nutritive value than the yellow one.

Nona Tad-y, the regional nutrition program coordinator, said watermelons are also good for people trying to lose weight because it is fat-free. A serving size of 9-by-7-by-5 centimeters contains 93 to 95 percent water and four to five percent carbohydrates, mainly fructose sugar.

Tad-y says watermelons can be a healthy snack food for children and an alternative to sweets and fattening desserts.

A US study on watermelons showed that the summer fruit is packed with lycopene, a phytochemical.

Lycopene is a red pigment that gives watermelons and tomatoes their color. It is believed to act as a powerful antioxidant by protecting cells from aggressive chemicals that damage their functions.

Scientists have found that lycopene in the diet correlates with reduced incidence of certain types of cancer, and lycopene levels in fat tissue—an indicator of lycopene consumption—have been linked with reduced risk of heart attack.

Scientists from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the United States Department of Agriculture noted that watermelons have as much or more lycopene as raw tomatoes. The amount depends on the variety and growing conditions.

Of the 13 cultivars they studied, the seedless ones tended to have more lycopene.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Fast food addictive, say some scientists

LONDON—A steady diet of hamburgers, fries and foods high in fat and loaded with calories may not only pile on the pounds—some scientists are questioning whether it could be addictive.

Researchers who have been testing the biological effects of fast foods are discovering that they can trigger hormonal changes in the body which could make it difficult to control eating.

"New and potentially explosive findings on the biological effects of fast food suggest that eating yourself into obesity isn't simply down to a lack of self-control," New Scientist magazine said recently.

Fast-food meals can deliver nearly the recommended daily calorie and fat intake in one meal. As people put on weight, they become more resistant to the hormone leptin, which is strongly linked to weight and appetite, and a brain peptide called galanin that stimulates eating.

Leptin releases signals to the part of the brain that coordinates eating behavior but as people gain weight they become more resistant to the effects of the hormone.

"Their brain loses its ability to respond to these hormones as body fat increases," Michael Schwatz, an endocrinologist at the University of Washington in Seattle, told the magazine.

Researchers are also looking into whether bingeing on foods high in fat and sugar cause changes in the brain associated with addiction to drugs.

"Highly palatable foods and highly potent sexual stimuli are the only stimuli capable of activating the dopamine system with anywhere near the potency of addictive drugs," according to John Hoebel, a psychologist at Princeton University in New Jersey.

But the magazine said other scientists argue there is no conclusive evidence that foods high in fat and sugar are addictive.

"Considering the paucity of evidence that fast food is addictive, I think the burden is on advocates of the addiction argument to provide evidence of addictiveness," said Michael Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Reuters

Search on for healthy but yummy ice cream

STATE COLLEGE, Pennsylvania—Could eating ice cream make you healthier?

There is growing interest in adding nutriceuticals—foods with medicinal properties—to ice cream.

Getting them into ice cream is relatively easy, researchers say. The trick is to do it in such a way that the finished product still tastes like ice cream—and not like fish, as has happened in some early experiments.

"There are a lot of people who don't want us to screw up their ice cream," said Bob Roberts, associate professor of food science at Penn State University. "These are the same people who say, 'I eat it because it tastes good, I don't eat it because it's good for me'," he said.

Roberts and Eric Decker, professor of food science at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, are working on ways to add Omega-3 fatty acids—which have been shown to reduce levels of blood fats linked with cardiovascular disease—to ice cream.

The research is part of a broader trend toward developing "functional foods," everyday items that are fortified with extra nutrients.

Rather than trying to persuade people to eat things they might not like, Roberts, Decker and a team of scientists from Penn State, UMass and the University of Connecticut are looking for ways to add Omega-3s to a wide range of foods in addition to ice cream, from orange juice to salad dressing to processed meats.

"Our ultimate goal is just to provide more types of foods that you can get your Omega-3s from, and foods where you can't tell the difference," Decker said.

But Omega-3 fatty acids, which most people get from eating fish, can have an unpleasant effect on ice cream. When Omega-3 fatty acids decompose, they develop a fishy smell and taste—not exactly what most ice cream customers are looking for.

Although the research is still preliminary, there is good news. Decker said a trial at UMass produced an Omega-3-fortified yogurt that tasted like regular yogurt.

AP

End nears for unmanned explorer spacecraft to Jupiter

PASADENA, California—As the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) temporarily grounds its shuttle fleet following the Columbia disaster, an unmanned spacecraft that has been exploring the solar system for 14 years is nearing the end of its mission—yet still revealing the secrets of a planet hundreds of millions of miles from Earth.

Galileo, which took five years to reach Jupiter, photographed asteroids, the stormy red spot, and the giant planet's moons.

The photos and measurements sent back to Earth have provided tantalizing clues suggesting three of those moons—Callisto, Europa and Ganymede—have liquid oceans, an idea that has fueled the imagination of scientists who speculate the salty water could harbor extraterrestrial life.

The probe also caught Io, the most volcanically active body in the solar system, in the act as it belched lava and plumes of dust mixed with gas.

Share of breakdowns

But Galileo's journey will soon end, with countless miles traveled, its fair share of breakdowns, and album after album of snapshots.

At the end of this month, mission operations at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for the craft will conclude. After that, scientists will check on it once a month until September, when it is directed to crash into Jupiter.

Galileo could be allowed to simply remain in orbit, but scientists feared it might collide with Europa and contaminate it with microbes from Earth, possibly damaging its environment.

The $1.5-billion mission met 70 percent of its science objectives and made a number of serendipitous discoveries along the way—despite a range of problems.

Its umbrella-like main antenna did not unfurl as planned two years after the launch. Nasa was forced to rely on a smaller antenna, severely squeezing the amount of data Galileo could beam back. Yet the spacecraft still relayed a wealth of data about the planet and its moons.

Galileo was also battered by intense radiation found close to Jupiter. The spacecraft—powered by radioactive plutonium—withstood four times the cumulative dose of harmful radiation it was designed to take. The bombardment took its toll, causing technical hiccups and occasional losses of data.

Overcoming adversity

From the beginning, it seemed the mission was constantly overcoming adversity.

Congress first approved the project in 1977, but it took another dozen years to get the spacecraft—named for Galileo Galilei, who discovered Jupiter's four largest moons in 1610—to the launch pad. It was waylaid in part by the 1986 Challenger disaster that grounded Nasa's space shuttle fleet.

In 1989, the more than six-meter spacecraft finally blasted into space aboard shuttle Atlantis and began its 3.7-billion-kilometer trip.

Along the way, it took the first close-up images of an asteroid. It topped the feat two years later when it spied a tiny moon in orbit around another space rock.

As Galileo approached Jupiter in 1994, it used its unique vantage point to photograph fragments of the comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 as they smashed into the atmosphere, producing brilliant flashes of light on the planet's far side that would have otherwise remained unseen.

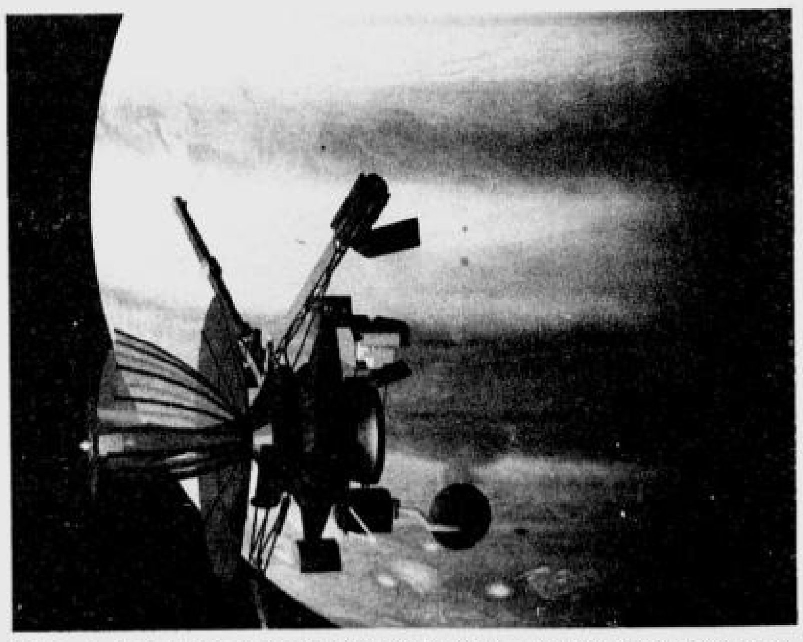
Close to Jupiter, Galileo released a probe that worked for nearly an hour, transmitting data about the planet's chemical composition, winds, clouds and natural radiation environment.

End of mission

At its height, 300 people worked on the mission at Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Now just two dozen do.

The end is slated for Sept. 21, when Galileo is expected to plunge into Jupiter's stormy atmosphere after completing its 35th loop around the planet.

Nasa recently announced plans for the Jupiter Icy Moons Orbiter, a nuclear spacecraft that would further reconnoiter Callisto, Europa and Ganymede. It won't launch before 2011 but it should pave the way for the further robotic exploration of the Jupiter system.



AS it arrived at Jupiter on Dec. 7, 1995, Nasa's Galileo orbiter received a stream of data transmissions—represented by the dots in this artist's depiction—from the atmospheric probe that was descending through Jupiter's clouds.

JET PROPULSION LABORATORY

The only other spacecraft in the neighborhood of Jupiter is Cassini, which should arrive at Saturn next year.

Given the risks of human space flight, planetary exploration will remain the province of robot explorers for decades.

Other than Mars, the rest of the solar system is too distant or too inhospitable for astronauts to explore.

AP

Our body's 'bus terminal'

By Tessa R. Salazar

EACH strand of your hair has a microcirculation network. At the back of your eyes, there's a microcirculation carpet that supplies the nerves. Each cuticle, each nerve of your skin has microcirculation.

The kidneys, lungs, skin and heart—all have microcirculation networks. Muscles need it as well. If the skin's microcirculation network was not working properly, wounds would not heal, which is what happens among diabetics.

Our body is wrapped with small blood vessels, or capillaries, which connect the arteries and veins. Composed of a single layer of cells called endothelium, microcirculation is the thin barrier between blood and the rest of the body.

It is through this microcirculation network that each part of the body gets nutrients. Even the bone has a network of microcirculation where it gets nutrients. For every part of the body that needs nutrients and needs to remove its waste, there has to be a microcirculation network.

Growing medical field

Dr. Ricardo Quintos, vascular surgeon and director of the Microcirculation Laboratory at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine and secretary general of the Asian Congress on Microcirculation, said microcirculation is so small it requires special microscopy equipment to study it. For many decades, only a small group of scientists studied microcirculation and the effects certain medications had on it.

Quintos said that in recent years, however, it had become apparent that many diseases had their earliest manifestations in microcirculation, and many drugs resulted in beneficial effects because they acted on microcirculation.

Microcirculation used to be of interest only to scientist-researchers but is now turning out as the gateway solution to maintaining health. It is now the target of new diagnostic and treatment procedures for various diseases ranging from heart disease to cancer.

Where the action is

Quintos likened the function of a microcirculation network to that of a bus terminal or a market and all the other parts of the circulatory system as just roadways.

The bus terminal is where people get on and get off. In similar manner, blood goes through the arteries and veins and when it gets to the microcirculation network, it releases nutrients to the different organs and picks up waste products and brings these to the kidneys for filtration.

Microcirculation is really where the action is, Quintos concludes.

One medical strategy that focuses on microcirculation is angiogenesis.

"Instead of doing a bypass operation, the heart would be induced to grow a new microcirculation network to bypass the obstruction. It's like a natural bypass. Eventually, there may no longer be a need for heart surgery," said Quintos.

For lung specialist Dr. Camilo Roa, vice president of the Asian Union of Microcirculation (AUM), microcirculation is important because it is where the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide occurs.

The study of microcirculation used to be the domain only of specialists, but AUM stressed that it is also for general practitioners because it involves all the organs. Even ear specialists have found out that a person's hearing grows progressively worse as he grows older because the microcirculation supplying the nerve endings responsible for hearing get attenuated.

The Asian Congress for Microcirculation from Feb. 20 to 22 at the Westin Philippine Plaza will hold discussions on the links of Asian traditional medicine to microcirculation, the effect of magnetic fields on microcirculation, and skin microcirculation in health and diseases. Engineers, health workers, doctors and scientists are expected to attend.

Microcirculation: gateway to health solutions

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

DR. Camilo Roa Jr., a well-respected professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, sent me some interesting readings about microcirculation, which, he lamented, many medical practitioners were still relatively unfamiliar with. It is a basic science, which is actually the foundation of applied or clinical medicine.

The role of microcirculation is so important that during the 4th Asian Congress for Microcirculation, it was unanimously concluded that its comprehensive understanding was the gateway for various health solutions in this millennium.

From an obscure science, it is now the subject of many modern research with more and more scientists realizing it importance in living organisms. As the term implies, it is supposed to be microscopic, too tiny to be seen by the naked eye. However, if one were to spread the cells of microcirculation on the ground, it would cover two tennis courts. It is considered the biggest organ of the body.

The functioning of the body is almost automatic. We move our limbs, wink our eyes, breathe and exchange gases in the lungs, digest our food, process several thousand thoughts a day, making all these processes seem like effortless activities. Microcirculation however, has to work fervently, many times furiously, just to sustain our activities and keep us going. We hardly give it a thought, but microcirculation is truly the unsung hero in our body.

Dr. Roa explains that microcirculation involves the flow of blood and other tissue fluids especially in the tiny blood vessels. Should there be a problem in the normal flow of blood and fluids in microcirculation, delivery of the necessary nutrients to the various tissues of the body is compromised.

Treatment for diseases

During the past two decades, microcirculation had been getting the respect it truly deserves. An encouraging observation in the last congress of the Asian Union for Microcirculation (AUM) was that research in this field of medicine was already revolutionizing treatment for serious diseases such as diabetes, atherosclerosis, heart attack, stroke, cancers and diseases in the kidneys and gastrointestinal tract.

In fact during the last decade, microcirculation research has resulted in pharmaceutical breakthroughs, leading to the treatment of various diverse conditions such as shock, stomach and duodenal ulcers, brain ischemia and erectile dysfunction, or impotence.

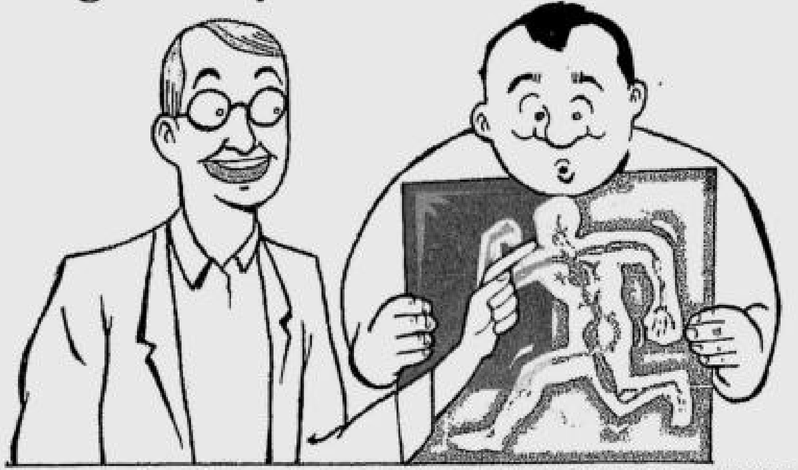


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

As a cardiologist, I have long been fascinated in the study of that part of microcirculation called the endothelium. It forms the basic cellular structure lining all blood vessels, from the biggest, such as the aorta, to the smallest microscopic capillaries.

It is easy to appreciate atherosclerosis as a progressive narrowing of the blood vessels due to deposits of fat and other blood elements. It starts though as endothelial dysfunction when this microscopic lining of blood vessels (endothelium) transforms from a healthy smooth layer of cells, to one that is rough and sticky.

Experts now agree that any drug that can prevent endothelial dysfunction, can also prevent atherosclerosis and all the disease processes associated with it. We are not referring only to heart-related diseases but a myriad of disorders involving the brain, heart, lungs, kidneys and other vital organs. Such drug can also have some "anti-aging" effects because if the blood vessels remain healthy, degenerative diseases can be prevented.

Protective mechanism

Microcirculatory research was initially focused on cardiovascular diseases, but subsequent research showed that it was also important in neurologic, gastrointestinal, renal and reproductive disorders. An important principle of therapy for many diseases is to protect microcirculatory function. This may involve formation of new microscopic blood vessels called angiogenesis, to improve overall circulation.

This protective mechanism of microcirculation can even compensate for complete occlusion of the bigger blood vessels. This explains why sometimes patients with occluded coronary arteries supplying blood to the heart do not develop heart attacks or heart failure. Microcirculation is working hard to compensate.

On the other hand, some patients may develop severe ischemia (lack of oxygen) in the heart; yet, when the doctor performs a coronary angiogram—an X-ray of the arteries—there is no evidence of significant occlusion. It is likely due to a problem in microcirculation, or what some call a small-vessel disease. Diabetics are quite notorious for developing this.

In cancers (neoplastic disorders), a reverse approach in microcirculation is employed. Therapy aims to suppress the growth of microcirculation supplying the area where the tumor is located. The principle is that "starving" the cancer cells will prevent their growth and spread.

Dr. Roa is the vice president of the Philippine Chapter of the Asian Union for Microcirculation (PhilAUM), which was organized in March 2000. The society has been supporting various educational and research activities in this field.

Dr. Roa, PhilAUM president, Dr. Xenia Tigno, and other members of the organizing committee of the 5th Asian Congress for Microcirculation are inviting those interested in this field to the forthcoming scientific congress hosted by the group.

The congress will cover a wide variety of scientific offerings for almost all medical specialties, including neurology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neurosurgery, vascular surgery, cardiology and basic medical sciences. For details contact the secretariat at 400-9483 or e-mail cvlab@cm.upm.edu.ph.

By unraveling the mystery of microcirculation, prevention and control of many diseases may be within reach, and growing to a ripe old age may no longer be an uncertain goal.

5th Asian Congress for Microcirculation

20-22 February 2003,
The Westin Philippine Plaza

PROGRAM

20 February 2003 (Thursday)

0700-1700 **Registration Open**
0915-0920 **Introduction**
0920-0950 **"Is Microvascular Flow Rate Related to Ghrelin, Leptin and Adiponectin Levels?"**
0950-1005 **Morning Break**
1005-1030 **Treatment of Glomerular Endothelial Dysfunction in Steroid-Resistant Nephrosis with Ganoderma Lucidum, Vitamin C, E, and Vasodilator**
1030-1055 **Oral Administration of Cardiotonic PIIIR Improves Ischemia-Reperfusion-Induced Microcirculatory Disturbances in Rat Mesentery**
1055-1120 **The Mechanism of Polydatin in Shock Treatment**
1120-1145 **Extract of Ginkgo Biloba Reverse Spasm of Basilar Artery and Improve Cerebral Microcirculatory Blood Perfusion in Rats with Subarachnoid Hemorrhage**
1145-1300 **Lunch Break**
1300-1330 **Effect of Static Magnetic Fields on Spontaneously Hypertensive Rats**
1330-1355 **Cardiotonic Pills for Prophylaxis and Treatment of Ischemic Coronary Heart Disease**
1355-1420 **Possible Immunomodulatory Action of *Carica Papaya* Seed Extract**
1420-1445 **Status of Herbal Medicine Development in the Philippines**
1445-1510 **'Tonkin' Herbal Drug: A Multidisciplinary Approach Development**
1510-1515 **Concluding Remarks**
1515-1615 **Poster Presentation**
Foyer, Grand Plaza Ballroom
1800-2100 **Cocktails/Welcome Reception and Opening Ceremonies**
Garden Area and Davao Room, Lower Lobby Level
Attire: National Costume or Formal

21 February 2003 (Friday)

0700-1700 REGISTRATION OPEN
0800-0830 Ribbon-Cutting Ceremonies, EXHIBITS & HOSPITALITY SUITES
Foyer, Grand Plaza Ballroom & Entrance to Romblon Room
0830-0915 Plenary Session I — Luzon Room
MICROVASCULAR MEDICINE AND PROTEOMICS
0915-1000 Plenary Session II — Luzon Room
CEREBRAL ANGIOGENESIS INDUCED BY GROWTH FACTORS
INTRAVITAL: MICROSCOPIC STUDIES USING MODELS
1000-1030 Morning Break
1030-1200 Parallel Session I A — Mindanao Room
ENDOTHELIUM IN HEALTH AND DISEASES
1) Cerebral Endothelial Dysfunction in Diabetes: Intravital Microscopic Analysis Using Streptozotocin-Induced Diabetic Rats
2) Progenitor Endothelial Cells; A Biologic Marker of Aging?
3) The Endothelium-Evolving Insights into CAD
1030-1200 Parallel Session I B — Visayas Room
ADVANCES IN CLINICAL ANATOMIC AND FUNCTIONAL IMAGING OF SPECIFIC ORGAN AND TISSUE PERFUSION
1) Quantitative Analysis of Ventricular Wall Motion
2) Value of PET SCAN in Assessing Myocardial Perfusion & Viability
3) The Maze of Myocardial Perfusion Imaging Protocols: A Review Article
4) Blood Microcirculation Velocimetry Using Digital Image Processing
1030-1200 Parallel Session I C — Luzon Room
THE MICROCIRCULATION IN DIABETES
1) Insulin-Mediated Vasodilation: Fact or Fiction?
2) The Insulin Signaling Cascade: Molecular Basis of Insulin Resistance
3) Endothelial Dysfunction in Diabetes Mellitus
4) The Diabetic Foot: Microcirculatory Dysfunction
OPEN FORUM
1030-1200 Parallel Session I D — Samar-Leyte Room, 2nd Flr.
MOLECULAR AND CLINICAL ASPECTS OF ANGIOGENESIS
1) Experimental Study on Function of Cardiomyocytes
2) Molecular and Cellular Role for Chitosan in Promoting Angiogenesis
3) Maturity of Pericytes in Cerebral Neocapillaries Induced by Growth Factors: Fluorescence Immunohistochemical Analysis Using Confocal Laser Microscopy
PANEL
1200-1330 Lunch-Symposia 1 — Luzon Room
NEW HORIZONS FOR CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS: VASCULAR SELECTIVITY AND ENDOTHELIAL DYSFUNCTION
Lunch-Symposia 2 — Mindanao Room
APPLICATION OF MICROCIRCULATORY SCIENCE IN DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES IN VASCULAR SURGERY
1330-1500 Parallel Session II A — Luzon Room
ENDOTHELIAL DYSFUNCTION, THE COMMON PATHOPHYSIOLOGY?
1) The Emerging Common Pathway for Cardiovascular & Metabolic Diseases: Endothelial Dysfunction
2) PPARs and Endothelial Dysfunction
3) The Pleiotropic Role of Fenofibrate: Going Beyond LDL-C Lowering Schemes
1330-1500 Parallel Session II B — Mindanao Room
MICROVASCULAR RESPONSE TO PHYSICAL FORCES AND VASCULAR & MICROVASCULAR MODELING
1) Ultra-Low-Frequency Geomagnetic Pulsation and Cardiovascular Biological Systems in Human
2) Biological and Health Effects of Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields
3) Health Effect of Vibration on Microcirculation
4) Work Related Muscoloskeletal Disorders of the Hands & Wrist Microcirculation
1330-1500 Parallel Session II C — Samar-Leyte Room, 2nd Flr.
RECENT ADVANCES IN MICROVASCULAR MEDICINE
1) Advancement of Imaging Processing and Analysis in Microvascular Research in China
2) Effect of Cerebral Lymphatic Blockade on Cortex Regional Blood Flow and Evoked Potential in Rats
3) Astrocytic Specific GFAP Promotor rAAV Medicred BaXå Gene to Treat Glioma
4) Ghrelin Affect TH1/TH2 Cytokines Balance of T Cells
1330-1500 Parallel Session II D — Visayas Room
FUNDUS FLUORESCEIN ANGIOGRAPHY AND CLINICAL APPLICATIONS
1) Basic Fundus Fluorescein Angiography
2) Clinical & Fluorescein Angiographic Presentation of Diabetic Retinopathy
3) Fluorescein Angiographically Evident Diabetic Macular Edema: A Retrospective Study
4) Age Related Macular Degeneration
1500-1530 Afternoon Break
1530-1615 Plenary Session III — Luzon Room
REGULATORY MECHANISMS OF HEPATIC MICROCIRCULATION
1630-1800 Parallel Session III A — Luzon Room
STATINS ON MICROCIRCULATION, ATHEROSCLEROSIS AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES
1) Statins, Endothelial Function and Atherosclerosis
2) Statins, Atherosclerosis and Cardiovascular Diseases
3) Statins or Fibrates or Both, Oh My! What Is The Optimal Protection Against Atherosclerosis?
1630-1800 Parallel Session III B — Visayas Room
RECENT ADVANCES IN ORGAN MICROCIRCULATION IN THE GASTROENTEROLOGICAL FIELD
1) A Possible Defensive Mechanisms at the Basal Region of Gastric Mucosa and Wound Healing
2) Involvement of VEGF in the Control of Hepatic Sinusoidal Permeability
3) Oral Administration of GPG Improves Ischemia-Reperfusion-Induced Microcirculatory Disturbances in Rat Mesentery
4) Protective Effects of Ascorbate on Endothelial Dysfunctions Resulted by Diabetic Induced Oxidative Stress in Mesenteric Microcirculatory Rat Model
1630-1800 Parallel Session III C — Mindanao Room
THE SKIN MICROCIRCULATION IN HEALTH AND DISEASES
1) Radiation-Sterilized Human Amnion Membrane as a Biological Wound Dressing
2) Choosing the Right Dressing for Wound Healing
3) Skin Microcirculation in Burn Wound Model
4) Effects of Aloe Vera on Leukocyte Adhesion and TNF-a and IL-6 Levels in Burn Wounded Rats Model
1800-1900 Council Meeting of the AUM — Sulu Room
1900-2100 Dinner-Cultural Show — Luzon Room
Attire: Business/National Costume

22 Februnry 2003 (Saturday)

0830-0915 Plenary Session IV — Luzon Room
MICROCIRCULATION, TARGET THERAPEUTIC OPTION IN CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
0915-1000 Plenary Session V — Luzon Room
A HEMODYNAMICALLY MEDIATED MECHANISM OF RENAL DISEASE PROGRESSION IN SEVERE GLOMERULONEPHRITIDES (GN)
1000-1030 Morning Break
1030-1200 Parallel Session IV A — Luzon Room
HYPERTENSION
1) Improvement of Risk Factor Management Amongst Hypertensive Patients by Educating Family Practitioners: The Israeli Blood Pressure Control (IBPC) Program
2) Clinical and Experimental Studies on the Relationship Between Microthrombosis and Endothelial Cells Injury
3) Microvascular Disease Relevance in the Hypertension Syndrome
4) The Effect of Cholesterol and Blood Pressure Reduction on Small and Large Artery Elasticity
1030-1200 Parallel Session IV B — Mindanao Room
RHEOLOGY
1) Polycythemia Vera Effects on Rheology and Vascular Endothelium
2) Thrombophilias – Cellular Risk Factor
3) Use of Blood Viscosity in Cancer Management
1030-1200 Parallel Session IV C — Visayas Room
ROLE OF OXIDATIVE AND ANTI-OXIDATIVE IMBALANCE ON ENDOTHELIAL DYSFUNCTION MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH
1) Glomerular Endothelial Dysfunction Oxidative Stress and Immunomicrocirculatory Defect in Nephrosis with Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis
2) Pulpal Blood Flow in Streptozotocin-Induced Diabetic Rats Measured by Laser Doppler Flowmetry
3) Endothelial Nitric Oxide Synthase Expression Compared Between Systemic and Pulmonary Circulation of Streptozotocin-Induce Diabetic Rats: Quantitative Comparison Using Image Analysis
1030-1200 Parallel Session IV D — Samar-Leyte Room
GETTING INTIMATE WITH THE BLOOD VESSELS
1) Endothelial Imaging by Sonography: How useful it is?
2) Microcirculation in Venous Ulcers
1200-1330 Lunch-Session — Luzon Room
FREE PAPER SESSION
1200-1330 Lunch-Symposia 3 — Mindanao Room
1) Sonography of Placenta Accreta
2) Status of ULTRASOUND in the Asian Region
3) Transcranial Doppler in Stroke and Increased Intracranial Pressure
4) Knowing the Phil. Society of Ultrasound in Clinical Medicine Inc., (PSUCMI)
OPEN FORUM
1330-1415 Plenary Session VI — Luzon Room
MICROVASCULAR RHEOLOGY
1415-1545 Parallel Session V A — Luzon Room
SHOCK AND ISCHEMIA REPERFUSION
1) The Basic Mechanism of Increased Vascular Permeability
2) Current Concepts in Fluid Replacement for Shock
3) Blood Densitometry Using Digital Image Processing
1415-1545 Parallel Session V B — Visayas Room
CEREBRAL MICROVASCULAR EVENTS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE
1) Early Pathophysiological Changes in Cerebral Vessel Predisposing to Stroke
2) Cerebral Microcirculatory Changes to X-Ray Contrast Media in the Rat Using Fluorescence Videomicroscopy
3) Selective Thrombin Inhibitor (Argatroban) Ameliorates Platelet Adhesion to Human Brain Microvascular Endothelial Cells in Vitro. *Observation by VEC-DIC Microscopy*
4) Effects of Nimodipine on Regional Blood Flow, Brain Water and Electrolytes in Rats with Subarachnoid Hemorrhage
1415-1545 Parallel Session V C — Mindanao Room
WOUND HEALING
1) Leg Ulcerations: Diagnostic Dilemma
2) Microcirculatory Aspects of Healing of Chronic Venous Ulcerations
3) Therapeutic Modalities in Chronic Venous Insufficiency
4) Application of Diagnostic Lasers to Evaluate the Wound Healing Process Following Laser Therapy
1545-1615 Afternoon Break
1615-1800 Council Meeting of the AUM
Sulu Room
1830-2100 Closing Ceremonies and Dinner-Show
Luzon Room
Attire: Business

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Asian Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases
Philippine Asian Vascular Society Inc
Philippine College of Occupational Medicine
Philippine Dermatological Society
Philippine Diabetes Association
Philippine Lipid Society
Philippine Society of Cutaneous Medicine
Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism
Philippine Society of Hematology & Blood Transfusion
Philippine Society of Hypertension
Physiology Society of the Philippines
Philippine Society for Vascular Surgery
Philippine Society of Vascular Medicine
Philippine Society of Ultrasound in Clinical Medicine, Inc.
Stroke Society of the Philippines
University of Sto. Tomas College of Medicine,
The Section of Cardiology, Unit of Theoretical Physics,
Electrophysiology & Cardiovascular Physiology
in alliance with The Research Center for the Natural Science University
Community of Cardiology Foundation
UP Diliman Department of Communications and Electrical Engineering
Vireoraina Society of the Philippines
Venous Forum Society of the Philippines

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Blood pressure-lowering drug found beneficial to diabetics

By Charles E. Buban

HYPERTENSION
DIABETES

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

A NEW drug that is potentially more effective than beta-blockers in reducing cardiovascular complications associated with high blood pressure was recently found to be beneficial for diabetics as well.

A substudy of the losartan intervention for endpoint reduction in hypertension (LIFE) study showed that losartan reduced the combined risk of cardiovascular death, stroke and heart attacks by 25 percent in the nearly 1,200 patients who had diabetes and hypertension.

It was also found to reduce the risk of cardiovascular death by 37 percent and the risk of death from all causes by 40 percent.

In the Philippines, losartan is currently indicated for the treatment and control of high blood pressure and renal protection in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Losartan was the subject of the LIFE study, which involved over 9,000 patients with high blood pressure and left ventricular hypertrophy, or increased thickness of the muscle wall in the heart's left ventricle.

The study showed losartan reduced the risk of fatal and nonfatal strokes by 25 percent compared to atenolol, a beta-blocker.

"Hypertension and type 2 diabetes are frequently concurrent diseases, and are associated with high-risk cardiovascular complications and death," said Dr. Lars Lindholm, professor at the Umea University Hospital of Sweden and principal investigator of the LIFE study diabetes subgroup.

Avoidable risk

"Since high blood pressure is the main avoidable risk factor for stroke, anything that helps reduce strokes and high blood pressure is a good thing," said Lindholm, who was a speaker during the 8th joint annual convention of the Philippine Lipid Society and the Philippine Society of Hypertension.

Lindholm said four in 10 people could have avoided stroke if they had had regular blood pressure checkups and had taken medication.

Statistics from the World Health Organization revealed that of the 146 million diabetes sufferers worldwide, some 60 million also have high blood pressure.

Tessellations

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

TO TESSELLATE means to arrange small shapes (usually squares) into a mosaic pattern. Derived from the Greek *tesseres*, the word actually means "four," since the first tilings were made from square tiles (with four sides).

I remember playing around with tessellations as early as grade school (although I did not know they were called tessellations then). I would scribble figures that resembled bathroom or kitchen tiles, repeat nice patterns, and try to figure out how many squares were needed to cover certain areas.

I encourage parents and teachers to encourage their children to indulge in these kinds of activities—they are not wasting their time or daydreaming. Indeed, they are developing geometric skills.

Erlinda L. Jalao, a teacher at the Isabela Central Elementary Pilot School, Isabela West District in the Division of Isabela City in Region 9, wrote:

"Aside from teaching, I am also a facilitator for a Philippine-Australian project in basic education, and train teachers in workshops in our division. Can you share some notes on tessellations? The topic is included in the 2002 restructured basic curriculum for Grades 2 and 3."

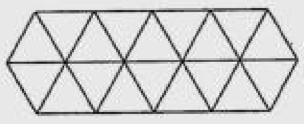
More interesting math

I am happy to note that tessellations are included in the early grades, since children will be exposed to other kinds of mathematics. I suspect they may find tessellations more interesting than addition or multiplication. (I must confess I did—and still do.)As for resources on tessellations, the best way to do research is through the Internet. The website www.mathforum.org/sum95/suzanne/tess.intro.html has some basic info.

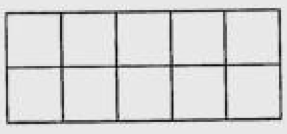
Perhaps the simplest tessellation is a regular tessellation, which is made up of congruent regular polygons. (Recall that a regular polygon has three or more sides and angles, all equal. "Regular" means the polygon has sides of the same length. "Congruent" means the polygons are of the same size and shape.)

Educator Suzanne Alejandre states, "Only three regular polygons tessellate in the Euclidean plane: triangles, squares and hexagons. We can't show the entire plane, but imagine that these are pieces taken from planes that have been tiled." She gives three examples of tessellations:

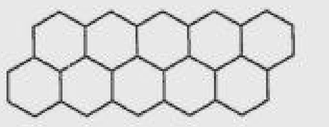
A TESSELLATION OF TRIANGLES



A TESSELLATION OF SQUARES



A TESSELLATION OF HEXAGONS



Alejandre cautions, "When you look at these three samples you can easily notice that the squares are lined up with each other while the triangles and hexagons are not. Also, if you look at six triangles at a time, they form a hexagon, so the tiling of triangles and the tiling of hexagons are similar and they cannot be formed by directly lining up shapes under each other—a slide (or a glide!) is involved."

A good way to introduce tessellations is to let students get their hands dirty, so to speak. Use colored paper (or even tiles) to discuss the topic. For older students, an enrichment activity could be working out the interior measures of the angles for the polygons in the tessellations. For example, 60 degrees for the triangle, 90 for the square, 108 for the pentagon, 120 for the hexagon.

Why can only a limited number of polygons be tessellated?

Alejandre explains, "Since the regular polygons in a tessellation must fill the plane at each vertex, the interior angle must be an exact divisor of 360 degrees. This works for the triangle, square and hexagon, and you can show working tessellations for these figures. For all the others, the interior angles are not exact divisors of 360 degrees; therefore, those figures cannot tile the plane."

Tessellations are found in art, such as Muslim architecture, Spanish drawings, Chinese and Japanese patterns. Mathematical ideas of symmetry and regularity can also be introduced through tessellations, which have been the object of much study. Go to the website above for lesson plans, student activities, and a more extensive background on tilings and tessellations. (I highly recommend www.mathforum.org, which contains hundreds of other activities on other math topics, from grade school to college.)

* * *

(Queena N. Lee-Chua, Ph.D., is an associate professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. She writes the column "Mind Games" for www.inq7.net every Wednesday. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.)

SCISCOPE

Parenting 101 at Asian Hospital

EXPECTING a baby? Planning to have one? Need help with the new addition in the family?

Asian Hospital and Medical Center, the newest medical facility in the country, conducts "Simply Maternal," a series of special classes every Saturday of March, May, July, September and November from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at AHMC's 4th floor multipurpose room.

"Simply Maternal" is a free and interactive seminar filled with interesting educational topics specifically designed for husbands and wives who are seeking guidance on maternal concerns. The highlights of the seminar include understanding birth and delivery, breathing and relaxing exercises, anesthesia and labor, medication and intervention, knowing the unborn, breastfeeding, postpartum care, and the roles of new fathers. The seminar also includes a session on caring for the newborn where *yayas* and caregivers are encouraged to attend.

For inquiries, call the AHMC Genesis Center at 771-9000 locals 8390 and 8391, or Patient Education at local 8462. You may also get in touch with Dr. Mila Torres at 771-9297. Registration is absolutely free.

ReachOut gets grant to combat TB

THE UNITED States Agency for International Development (USAID) has recently awarded over P24 million to ReachOut Foundation International to implement a one-year tri-media campaign that will increase people's knowledge about symptoms, causes, prevention and treatment of tuberculosis (TB).

Under a cooperative agreement with USAID, ReachOut will produce 16 radio and three TV public service advertisements that will be aired nationwide. ReachOut will also produce posters and brochures that will assist the Department of Health's promotion of DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course).

Said Jomar Fleras, president and CEO of ReachOut, "We are extremely pleased with the support provided by USAID in combating TB in the Philippines. The incidence of TB in the country is quite high although the DOTS method is available in 66 out of 77 provinces and about 3,000 TB diagnostic facilities are spread throughout the country."

UST postgrad course

THE DEPARTMENT of dermatology of the University of Sto. Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery will hold its 18th annual postgraduate course on "Dermatopharmacology Update" from March 10 to 11 at the CEM Auditorium, San Martin de Porres Building (Medicine Bldg.), UST.

The guest speaker will be Dr. Neil H. Shear, professor and chair of dermatology of the University of Toronto Medical School, will discuss drug interactions, toxic epidermal necrolysis and Stevens-Johnson syndrome and immunomodulators and cytotoxic drugs in dermatology.

For inquiries, call up Dr. Ma. Victoria Dizon at 817-6358 or Dr. Lorelie Nagrampa-Baluyut and Dell Kristie Ortega at 731-9356.

Your baby really watches TV

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

WASHINGTON—Babies are not just passing idle time when they stare goggle-eyed at the television—they are actually learning about the world, US researchers said.

Based on the study, parents may want to limit what their infants see on television, said Donna Mumme, assistant professor of psychology at Tufts University in Boston, who led the research.

"Children as young as 12 months are making decisions based on the emotional reactions of adults around them," Mumme, whose research is published in the journal Child Development, said in a statement.

"It turns out they can also use emotional information they pick up from television. This means that adults might want to think twice before they speak in a harsh or surprising tone or let an infant see television programs meant for an older person."

Mumme's team already knew that babies watch other children and adults for cues about the world. A mother urging her baby to eat some "yummy" soup or a brother crying in fear when a dog approaches can influence an infant's reaction.

But can television?

Mumme's team tested babies, showing actors reacting on a videotape to objects such as a red spiral letter holder, a blue bumpy ball and a yellow garden hose attachment.

Babies aged 10 months or 12 months were later given the same objects to play with.

Ten-month-olds did not seem to be influenced by the videos, Mumme's team reported. But the 1-year-olds were.

When the actors acted neutrally or positively to an object, the babies happily played with them. But if the actor had seemed afraid or disgusted, the infant would avoid the object. *Reuters*

Right face, wrong time

DISCOVER

Massie K. Santos

IN THE SPIRIT of Valentine's Day, this column is dedicated to relationships, old and new, and the reactions they provoke.

Everyone who's ever been in a relationship, say Buffy and Angel, Spike and Buffy, Angel and Cordelia, etc., secretly (if not outwardly as well) hopes that saying "_____ and I are seeing each other" will provoke thrilled looks, demands for details of the affair, and maybe even wild applause from friends and family like Xander, Willow and Giles.

They also know that those who approve might privately disapprove, and might share that uneasiness with others. This, of course, leads to conversations that start out with: "She's/He's/You're seeing WHO? Since when? And more importantly, WHY???"

As someone who's wondered about certain relationships friends have gotten themselves into, I can safely say that asking the parties involved to explain themselves usually leads to answers that discuss various body parts, attire and attitude.

Attractiveness of faces

In the interest of making such discussions more thought provoking, I now present a study conducted by a 25-year-old graduate student by the name of Anthony Little at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Mr. Little is part of the Perception Lab in the Psychology Department of the university and has co-authored several papers in the last three years. According to his personal website, his research is focused on "examining the cues to personality attribution in faces and exploring the factors that influence the attractiveness of faces."

That being said, I will apologize right here for the fact that men cannot use the following information as an excuse when asked why they are seeing someone. They can blame the gender bias on Little's research.

Let's start by looking at the study itself, which Little himself wrote for FirstScience.com in late January, and which other papers have written about since.

Studs are survivors

The question involves the attraction to beauty and the possible role of evolution. In short, why do we fall for the good-looking ones? (I know some will invariably bring up the "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" adage, but I will say that there does appear to be universal agreement on the attractiveness of a particular face.)

The answer, says Little, is partly due to evolution, and the notion that the strong, studly males are the ones with the most survival skills. Females choose to mate with them and bear offspring who go for the strong studs, and bear children, and repeat the cycle and... You get the picture.

If this sounds familiar, dare I hope you remember my piece last year on Amotz Zahavi and his theories of evolution?

Anyway, put this notion of evolution into human terms. According to the study involving 18,000 people that Little et al. conducted on British TV, strong studly males have chin stubble, defined features and generally look manly—like George Clooney, Aragorn or the Marlboro Man (take note, all examples are mine).

The survey says women would love to have a fling with said manly studmuffin because he is fun loving, needs no Viagra and is (supposedly, I haven't been able to look into this further) less susceptible to illness because he's got the testosterone working.

Baby-faced men

On the other hand, the survey says women would want to settle down and raise a family with feminine-faced males (Little's term, not mine)—boyish faces with big eyes whose appearances are closer to Ewan Macgregor or Legolas—because they look more honest and sincere.

Hold all comments until you hear the other part of Little's equation—one that most newspapers have somehow misquoted (a hint on the importance of firsthand sources when doing research, unless said the firsthand source is dust or in a language you can't read).

Little says that an earlier study by the university found that women tended to fall for the studmuffins right around that time of the month, and prefer the baby-faced guys the other 21 days.

Some newspapers have somehow misinterpreted that as saying that a woman on the Pill goes for the studs, while a woman, who doesn't, picks the nice guys.

Okay, now you can comment. And feel free to let me know what you think, too.

Alas, my Buffy and Angel gossip must be deferred to a future column due to space constraints. But girls, the next time your taste in men raises questions, you can always say it was the timing.

* * *

(E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.)

Noted nephrologist updates audience on rare form of anemia

ONE of the highlights of the recently held 14th Asian colloquium in nephrology was a symposium that featured the lecture "Clinical Update on Pure Red Cell Aplasia" by Dr. John Knight, a world-renowned expert from Australia. Dr. Knight is the founder of the Center for Kidney Research in Australia.

In his talk, Dr. Knight updated the audience on the latest information available about the rare form of anemia called Pure Red Cell Aplasia or PRCA. In PRCA, the bone marrow stops producing red blood cells either temporarily or permanently.

Dr. Knight mentioned that PRCA remains a rare event. It has been reported with all major erythropoietin products. Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development is taking all appropriate steps to identify and report every case associated with Eprex and to increase the understanding of erythropoietin-associated PRCA.

He added that in the interest of patient safety, Johnson & Johnson has established a program which included a thorough review of more than 10 years of safety experience, a rigorous process of safety, surveillance, case report follow-up and antibody testing. Johnson & Johnson is committed to continue informing health authorities, physicians, other health care providers, patients and the public about this issue.

While the data available is insufficient to establish a class effect, Dr. Knight mentioned that Johnson & Johnson believes the preponderance of evidence supports that PRCA is associated with all erythropoietin products, partcularly HAS-free formulations self-administered subcutaneously by patients.

With more than 1.6 million patient years of marketplace experience in countries outside of the US, Eprex continues to provide timely, safe, effective and cost-effective treatment of anemia and fatigue in patients with chronic kidney disease or cancer when used in accordance with its label.

Drive vs cervical cancer intensified

By Charles E. Buban

CERVICAL cancer strikes nearly 500,000 women worldwide every year. This global toll could be much higher because not all women—particularly those in developing countries—can afford a Pap smear, a procedure that can decrease cervical cancer deaths by more than 70 percent.

The Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) signed an agreement last Wednesday with Sanofi-Synthelabo Philippines to launch an intensified drive to promote proper health care and prevent cervical cancer in the country.

"In the Philippines, about 4,000 new cases of cervical cancer were reported last year," said Dr. Lyra Ruth Clemente-Chua, POGS president.

To reduce this number, POGS has initiated nationwide free Pap smear screening tests.

Pap smears involve the taking of sample cells from the cervix during a pelvic examination. The cells are then examined in a laboratory.

Increasing awareness

"We need to strengthen our commitment to raise (public) awareness on the importance of optimum feminine hygiene to curb the incidence of women's diseases such as common infections and cervical cancer," said Peter Dolinsky, president of Sanofi-Synthelabo Philippines.

Last year, Dolinsky said, 3,667 women availed of free Pap smear tests offered by POGS and his company.

Research has shown that the human papillomavirus (HPV), the virus which causes genital warts, play an important role in the development of cervical cancer. Many women with cervical cancer or precancerous conditions have HPV in their cervical cells.

HPV causes changes in the cells, which can often be detected in a Pap smear.

Among the risk factors associated with cervical cancer are having multiple sexual partners, intercourse at early age, having sex partners infected with HPV, smoking, and a compromised immune system.

POGS will conduct free Pap smear tests on Feb. 19 at the out-patient department of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City and on Feb. 26 at the Medical City in Pasig City. Twenty-eight more of these free tests will be conducted within the second quarter.

Questions on Women's Health:
YOUR DOCTOR KNOWS BEST

Q: There are many feminine hygiene products in the market. How do I know which is the best for me?

A: First things first. Our body is already equipped with ways of protecting itself. For example, a woman's body naturally produces Lactic Acid. What this Lactic Acid does is lower the pH level inside the vagina, around 3.8-4.2, to make it more acidic. This level of acidity inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria and thus protects the vagina.

However, because of our active lifestyle--wearing tight fitting jeans, using nylon underwear, t-back and girdles, having more than one sexual partner, and stress--we become susceptible to vaginal infection.

So a little help will not go amiss, but we should be very selective. The best product is always the one that contains the same element your body already produces. Hence, read the labels carefully.

Using the wrong product, like soap or other feminine wash, for your feminine hygiene can do more harm than good. Remember, your genital area is so sensitive and needs something that will not upset its natural protective elements. Because when that happens, you may experience itching, irritation, and possibly infection.

Always pick the ones approved and trusted by doctors. Listen to them. They are the experts in these things. Sometimes advertisers do not tell you the whole truth to suit their purpose. An endorsement by doctors lessens your chances of being deceived. For example, some products claim that your external genitalia's pH is around 5. This is not entirely true. Your external genitalia is made up of several parts--and not only skin. And only the outermost, which is skin, has the pH level of 5. What they do not tell you is that the pH level becomes more acidic as it nears your internal genitalia.

Most importantly, when you feel something different, consult your doctor immediately. They are the best people to advise you.

This message was brought to you by
Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society
and
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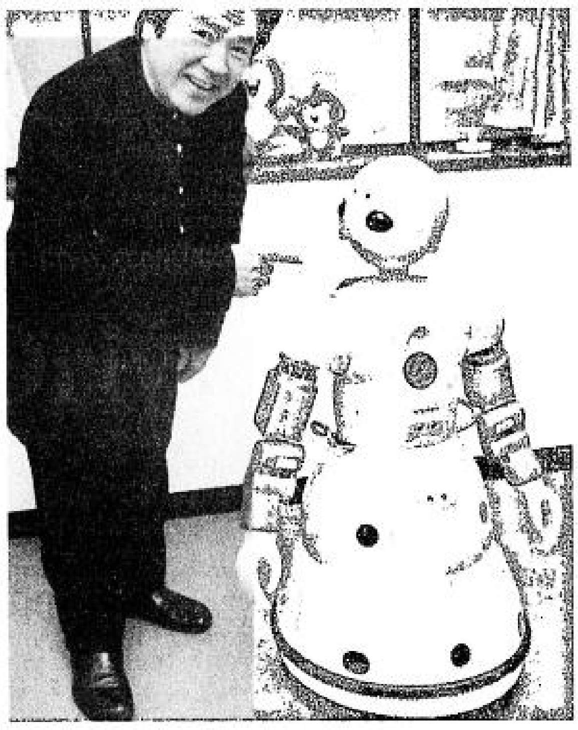


FAMILY ROBOT Designer Toshiyuki Kita speaks to this robot on wheels that developer Mitsubishi Heavy Industries says will become a future house-sitter, caretaker, nurse and friend for the family. The bubble-headed mouthless robot has cameras inside its head and comes equipped with voice and face recognition capabilities that allow the machine to search for and follow voices, faces and movements. It runs on a battery for two hours and will go recharge itself when power runs low. AP

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Teething time

HOW long will my child be teething? She's 2 years old and she already has so many teeth. There are times when she's cranky and I don't understand her. Does that mean she's teething?

Dorothy E.

Children your daughter's age could be cranky when they are teething. However, teething is only one of the things a child goes through especially at that age, so be very observant of the child's needs.

By age 2, the second baby molars would have come out. The development of teeth could be late in some kids but when all 20 baby teeth are out, there will be a long wait for the next teething period, which is until age 6 when the six permanent molars and the front teeth would have come out.

Aspirin helps save lives

THE "HUMBLE" aspirin is one of the oldest drugs in the physician's armamentarium. It is also one of the cheapest. Many health experts consider it as one of the most important cardiovascular drugs that can help prevent many heart attacks and strokes, and save many lives.

Unfortunately, aspirin is still massively underused, according to a research published in the British Medical Journal.

Although well-known as a fever pill for its antipyretic effect, aspirin serves an even more important function as a potent antiplatelet, a blood thinner which prevents blood elements, especially the platelets, from being sticky. It, therefore, prevents the blood from clotting and blocking arteries, which may lead to heart attacks and strokes. Previous studies show that aspirin (and other antiplatelet drugs) could prevent around 100,000 premature deaths worldwide every year.

As a result, aspirin is almost always prescribed to patients with a heart attack or unstable angina (chest pains), and is widely used for long-term protection by people who have had a previous heart attack or stroke.

A study funded by the British Heart Foundation and the Medical Research Council (MRC) strengthened evidence that aspirin prevents heart attacks and strokes in a wide range of patients with high-risk conditions such as angina, peripheral arterial disease (narrowing of the leg arteries) and diabetes.

But recent surveys in the United States and United Kingdom have shown that less than half of patients with high-risk conditions are prescribed aspirin. The researchers estimate that 40,000 lives worldwide could be saved every year if everyone with a high-risk condition for whom aspirin was deemed appropriate actually took it.

More benefits

Said Dr. Colin Baigent, MRC scientist who led the research: "This study shows that aspirin is beneficial in an even wider range of conditions than previously believed. What we now need is to ensure that aspirin, or some other antiplatelet drug, is routinely considered for patients who might need it."

Dr. Baigent adds: "(But) surveys in the UK have shown that aspirin is currently prescribed to less than a quarter of people with diseases such as peripheral arterial disease...in which heart attack and strokes are common.

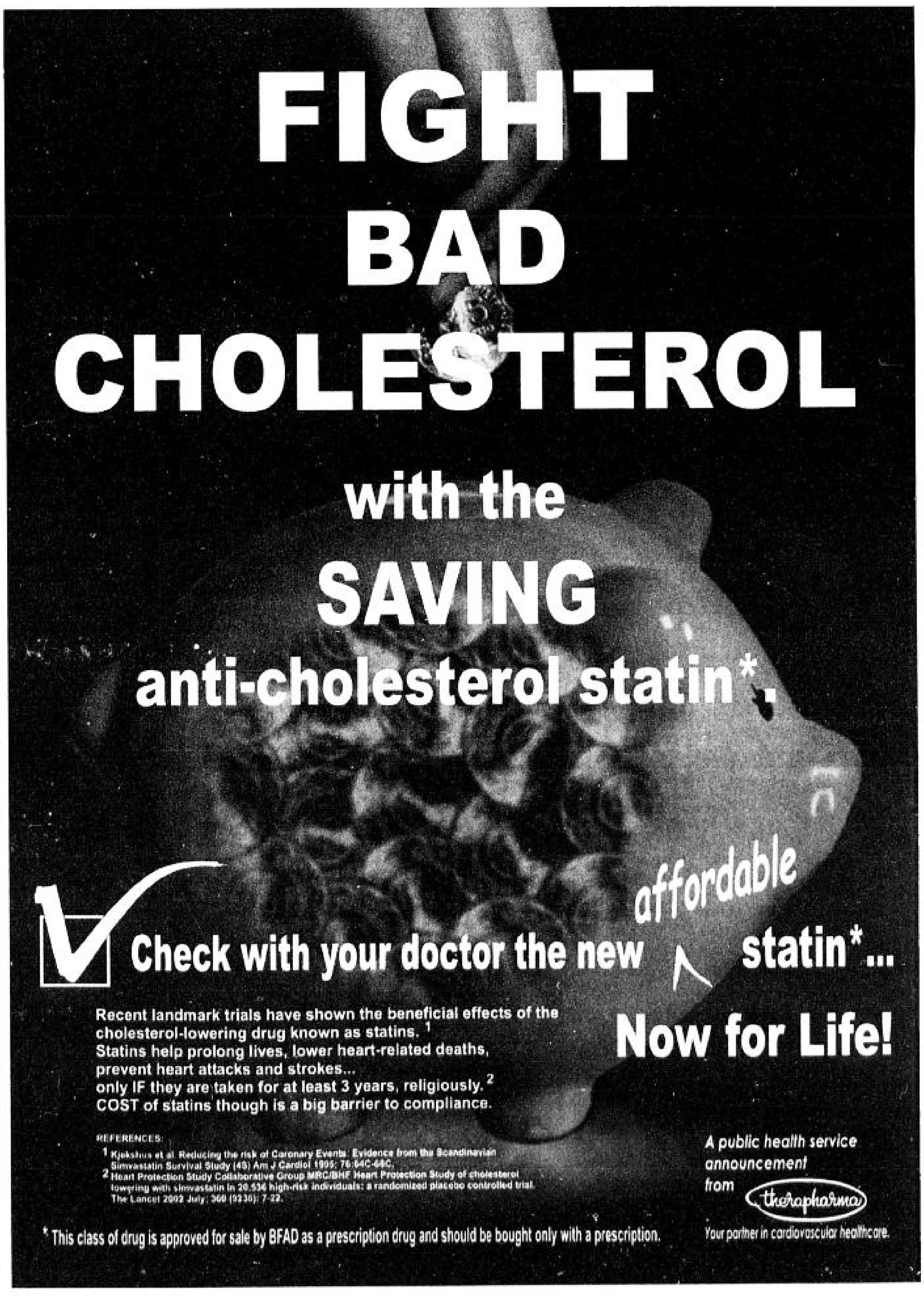
"We believe aspirin may well have helped protect these high risk patients but sadly many will die from their very first heart attack—by which time aspirin (would be) too late."

Prof. Sir Charles George, medical director of the British Heart Foundation, said: "These findings reinforce what we have known for some time, that aspirin is a life-saving treatment that will provide major benefits to many thousands of people at high risk of heart attack or stroke. Aspirin is not an appropriate treatment for everyone but it is important that all those who might benefit are actually offered it."

Cardiovascular diseases are now the leading causes of deaths in the Philippines. It is expected that with an optimal use of aspirin, the incidence of heart attacks and strokes may be prevented.

A low-dose of aspirin—80 to 160 mg—which may be obtained in one to two tablets daily of Aspilet, already gives adequate antiplatelet effect with minimal side-effects. A tablet of Aspilet contains 80 mg of aspirin.

Although Aspilet is an over-the-counter product, patients are advised to consult their doctor to see whether they are suitable candidates for aspirin therapy.



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REFERENCES:
[1] Kjekshus et al. Reducing the risk of Coronary Events: Evidence from the Scandinavian Simvastatin Survival Study (4S) Am J Cardiol 1995; 76:64C-68C.
[2] Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of cholesterol lowering with simvastatin in 20,536 high-risk individuals: a randomized placebo controlled trial. The Lancet 2002 July; 360 (9326): 7-22.

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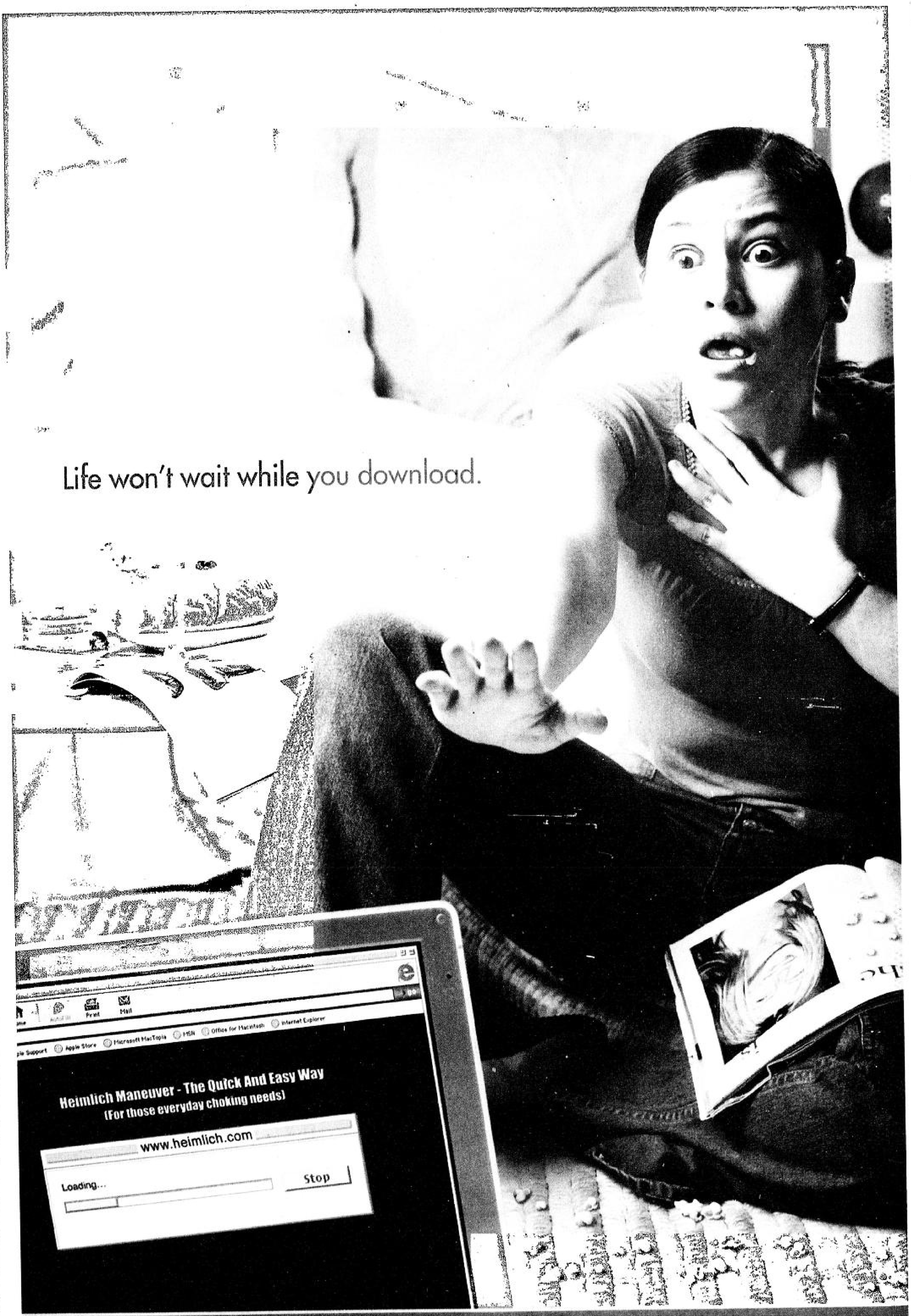
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SATURDAY Special
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Lisa Marie Presley follows in her father's footsteps

By Steve Gorman

ELVIS AND LISA MARIE. The late King of Rock's daughter is belatedly launching her own musical career.

LOS ANGELES—Twenty-five years after Elvis Presley's death, the only child of the king of rock 'n' roll is launching her own musical career with a newly issued record that has some critics all shook up.

Pop music progeny

"Lights Out," the bluesy first single from Lisa Marie Presley's upcoming debut album, was officially released to radio stations around the country on Monday by EMI Group Plc's Capitol Records, the latest example of pop music progeny following in the footsteps of famous parents.

Whether Lisa Marie, 35, achieves the success of Jakob Dylan, Julian Lennon or Hank Williams Jr. remains to be seen. Her recording debut poses the twin challenges of overcoming inevitable comparisons to her legendary father and years of tabloid headlines borne of her high-profile former marriages to Michael Jackson and Nicolas Cage.

But "Lights Out," which contains an eerie lyrical reference to her Presley heritage, has received glowing early reviews.

Hauntingly personal

Los Angeles Times music writer Robert Hilburn calls the song "a powerful, hauntingly personal work" and writes that Presley's "gutsy, blues-edged voice has a distinctive flair." Bill Ellis, writing for the Memphis, Tennessee, Commercial Appeal, says that judging from a four-track sampler circulated to critics, the album is "better than you might think." "Lisa Marie is a solid singer with plenty of character in her husky voice, a cross somewhere between Sheryl Crow and Cher," he wrote.

'Serious artist'

The album, "To Whom It May Concern," is due out April 8, and "Lights Out" actually has received some advance airplay since it was leaked to a Memphis station last month.

"We wouldn't play it unless it was a good record," Los Angeles radio station KIIS-FM's program director, John Ivey told the Times.

"This record has the stamp of a serious artist all over it."

Presley, who was 9 when her father died in 1977 and was raised by her mother, actress Priscilla Presley, confronts her family's past with haunting lyrics:

"Someone turned the lights out there in Memphis/That's where my family's buried and gone/Last time I was there I noticed a space left/Next to them there in Memphis in the damn back lawn."

Background

"I never wanted to write a song, ever, about anything indicating my genetic code whatsoever, or my background. But if I had to do it, then 'Lights Out' would be that song," Presley said in promotional materials for the album. "It's kind of a darker, odd take on it. It's not like, 'Woo! I'm from Memphis, and look at my life and it's so wonderful.'"

"Lights Out" was produced by Capitol Records president Andrew Slater, who previously has worked with such acts as Fiona Apple, Macy Gray and Jakob Dylan's band, the Wallflowers.

Although lyrics for the album were penned almost entirely by Presley, she received songwriting help from Glen Ballard, the producer who signed her five years ago to his then-Capitol-distributed label and is best known for his work on Alanis Morissette's blockbuster release "Jagged Little Pill." Other collaborators include songwriter-musician Danny Keough, Presley's first husband and still close friend, as well as former Smashing Pumpkins leader Billy Corgan, who co-wrote and plays on a track titled "Savior." *Reuters*

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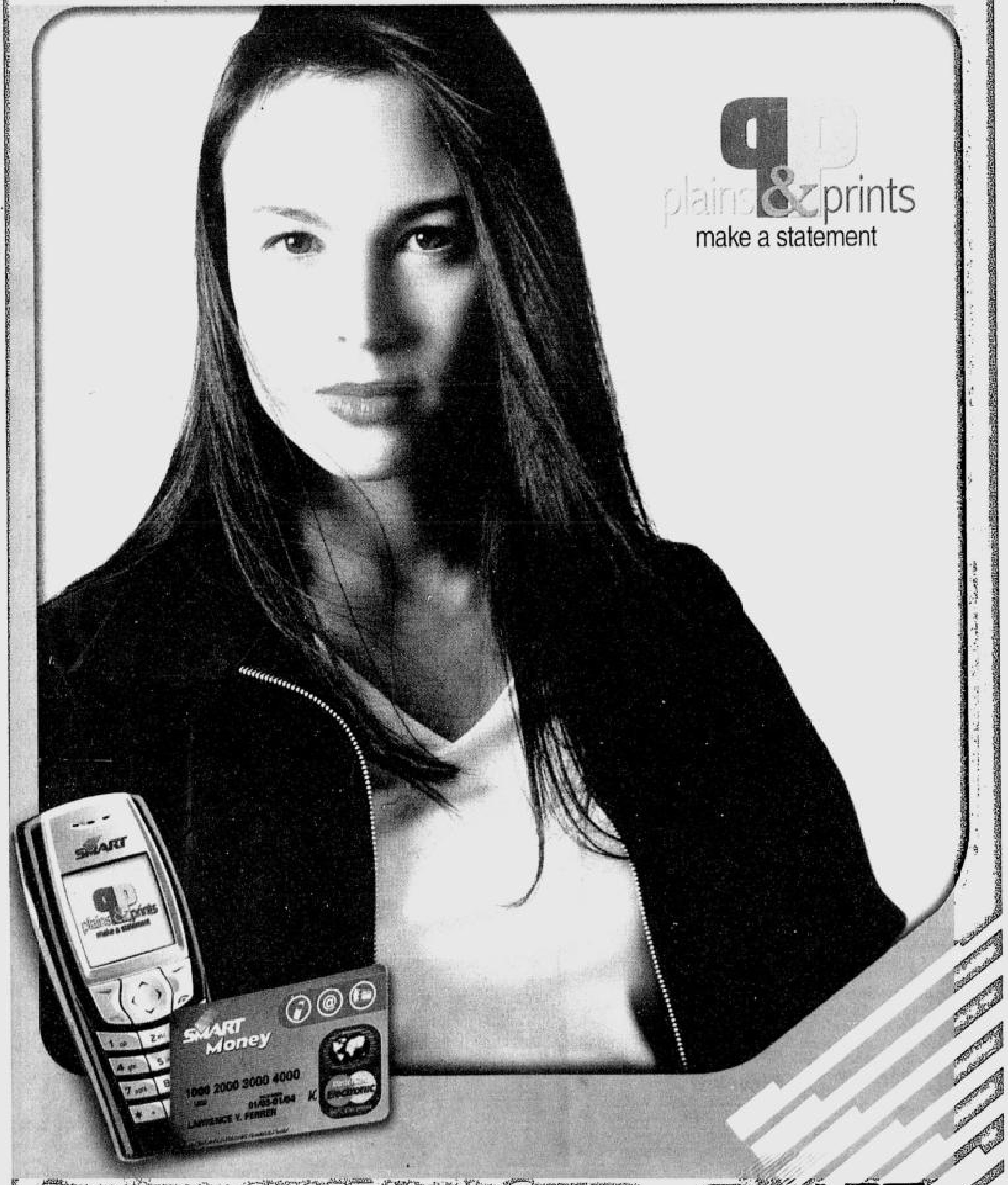

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Ma-Yi Theater Company wins praise in New York

By Nestor U. Torre

THE FIL-AMERICAN drama group's exceptional productions through the years have prompted US cultural observers to hail it as one of the most dynamic emerging theater companies in the Big Apple.

A SCENE from "The Romance of Magno Rubio," Ma-Yi's latest production.

YEARS ago, we acted with George Ortoll at Repertory Philippines. After a while, however, we lost touch with the young actor, who moved his base of activities to the United States.

Business

Through the theater grapevine, we learned that, aside from attending to his family's business in the US, George had acted in some plays.

More importantly, he had involved himself with the Fil-American group, Ma-Yi Theater Company in New York City. The stage production group was put up in 1989 by some Filipino theater people who were living in the States.

Its laudable mission was to provide Fil-American theater talents (scriptwriters, directors, actors, etc.) both a showcase and a voice in the teeming cultural melting pot of the Big Apple.

Unfortunately, financial problems almost did the fledgling theater company in, until George, with his training in business, stepped in to help sort out the group's financial problems.

Happily, as the company's Executive Director, George has succeeded in turning Ma-Yi around, and it's now doing much better.

Stalwarts

Along with Artistic Director Ralph Peña and some veteran thespic stalwarts like the award-winning Ching Valdes-Aran, George has made it possible for Ma-Yi to not just present plays during its regular seasons, but also to train new Asian-American talents, some of whom will soon make their mark on the US theater scene.

In fact, Ma-Yi has done so well that it's been hailed by the New York Times and other cultural observers as one of the most dynamic emerging theater groups in New York. Since the Big Apple has literally hundreds of such theater companies, the special mention is heartening, indeed.

Funds

Ma-Yi now has a substantial annual budget, only 40 percent of which comes from ticket sales. That's why George and Ma-Yi's board of directors have secured grants and other subsidies from New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Alliance of Resident Theaters/Androw W. Mellon Arts Relief Fund, the Phillip Morris Companies, the Dorothy Streslin Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation.

It's been an uphill battle, but Ma-Yi's sterling record has impressed these and other arts-oriented groups, and this has made fundraising easier for George and other Ma-Yi stalwarts.

Expansion

Also impressive is the theater group's expansion of its arts activities and services to include a special interest in training new Asian-American directors by way of two-year internships awarded to successful candidates.

During those two years, they undergo training through symposia, workshops and direct mentoring. Each candidate is given a showcase of his work as part of Ma-Yi's theater season.

The program emphasizes the director's role in developing new Asian-American works, and the practical aspects of theater production in New York City.

Initiative

Coupled with this initiative, Ma-Yi also has its New Works, New Voices program in partnership with the Jerome Foundation, supporting the development of emerging Asian-American playwrights.

Last year, as part of its New Works Development Workshop, four new Asian-American writers were given commissions to support the creation of new plays. Each writer is collaborating with professional directors, designers and actors in a series of workshops in New York City.

Eventually, some of their plays may be staged by Ma-yi, to add to its already impressive list of produced works on the Asian-American expereince.

Ana Feleo acts and sings her heart out

By Andy P. Bais

FELEO. Loves Ryan Cayabyab's music.

COME Feb. 21, "Spoliarium, " a new opera on the life of the great Filipino painter, Juan Luna, opens at the Cultural Center of the Philippines with no less than Maestro Ryan Cayabyab writing the music from the English libretto by Fides Cuyugan-Asensio.

Lead roles

Essaying the lead roles are Robert Seña as Luna and Margarita Yulo-Gomez and Ana Feleo alternating as his wife, Paz Luna y Pardo de Tavera.

Luna's role was reportedly written specially for Robert, whose reputation as a world-class musical theater talent is beyond question. His was the voice that almost stole the thunder from Lea Salonga when he was a guest in her homecoming concert some years back. However, others may wonder how Ana, as one of Robert's leading ladies, got into the picture, or in this case, the opera.

Fortunately for Ana, who's in her final year as a voice student at the UP College of Music, she happens to have the librettist, her Tita Fides, for her voice teacher. And, like mothers, teachers know best.

Gift of music

Unlike most singers, who start singing at an early age, Ana only came to realize that she had the gift of music when she was already a teenager. And she has the hit religious musical "Magnificat," another Cayabyab opus, to thank for it.

At the time when the cast members of "Magnificat" had no venue for rehearsals, Ana's parents, Laurice Guillen and Johnny Delgado who are Marian devotees, offered their residence as a temporary rehearsal site.

Generosity

The couple's generosity was shared by their two daughters, Ana and Yna, who graciously volunteered to type the musical's script and to photocopy the music sheets.

Specifically, Ana's constant exposure to Cayabyab's music and her "singing along" with the cast members during rehearsals led her to discover that she could carry a tune, and very well at that!

So, it came as no surprise that, when Ana finally ventured into musical theater, her first outing was in "Magnificat." She must have loved the exciting world of musical theater and Cayabyab's music that much! Her next exposure was in Musicat's restaging of "Alikabok, the music of which was again written by the prolific Cayabyab.

Voice lessons

"Spoliarium" is Ana's third major musical theater experience, and her first opera. She admits that she thought long and hard before accepting the role of Luna's wife in the opera. She thought that, vocally, she was not yet prepared. She finally said yes when her Tita Fides assured her that she would help her. Until now, she has been religiously taking daily voice lessons at her mentor's house.

One major reason why she accepted the role was the opera's music. "I've always loved Ryan's music, but 'Spoliarium' is my favorite. Somehow, it's different from the others he's done. The music itself already brings you to the emotion. You don't even have to try.

"The first time I listened to the music, I fell in love with it right away. I'm addicted to Ryan's work," Ana enthuses.

And how is it working with Robert Seña? "When we had our first music rehearsal, *nakatanga lang ako, nanood lang. Ang galing-galing niya talaga!* But he never made me feel *na star siya*. So, I was never intimidated, " she narrates.

Traits

Ana reveals that there are certain traits in her character in the opera that she can identify with. "For instance, we are both optimists. Paz was idealistic, full of love and life. It was only later that she became disillusioned with Luna because he loved his art more than her.

"I know the feelings of Paz, *kahit na hindi ganun kalalim—na akala mo* happy ending *ang buhay, yun pala*, it can be tragic," she explains.

Thus far, Ana has already started to reap the fruits of her daily voice lessons: Her vocal range is now wider. "*Trabaho lang talaga ako ng trabaho dito* because I know what I'm up against," she adds.

Ana plans to go abroad for further studies and to pursue a special course in musical theater. We trust, however, that she keeps her plan on hold. We believe that there are bigger opportunities waiting for her *here*.

"BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM." Audience favorite at last year's Sundance filmfest.

Five delightful films at the UK Film Festival

By Rito P. Asilo

IT WAS a bountiful harvest at the recent UK Film Festival at the Shangri-La Plaza. At just P30 per film, it was truly a remarkable move by the British Council to bring the United Kingdom's culture closer to the Pinoy movie-going public.

The avid cinephile got a delightful serving of contemporary British films, each filled with a delectable mix of drama, comedy, romance and adventure.

Idol

Of the five films, Gurinder Chadha's "Bend It Like Beckham" (2002) has the most commercial appeal. It's about an Anglo-Indian girl, Jess (Parminder K. Nagra), who wants to play soccer, like her idol David Beckham, but is held back by her parents' orthodox Sikh traditions that stipulate that a woman's place is in the kitchen, cooking chapatti for her husband.

The problem lies not in how much she loves to play, but in the natural gift she has for the game. Opportunity comes knocking, offering a university scholarship and a chance to play professionally.

Add to this a budding romance with her Caucasian coach (Jonathan Rhys Meyer), and all hell breaks loose, so Jess has to choose between tradition and ambition.

Feel-good comedy

This feel-good comedy of ethnic manners was among 107 British films funded by the UK's national lottery in 2000-2002. Of that number, 11 have been released but only two were profitable-Altman's "Gosford Park" and "Bend It Like Beckham." The film won awards in Toronto, Locarno and was a crowd favorite in last year's Sundance.

Look for cameos of Beckham with wife Victoria (Posh Spice of the Spice Girls) and former channel V VJ and current National Geographic Channel half-Pinoy host Trey Farley.

"Love and Death in Long Island," director Richard Kwietniowski's 1997 debut from Gilbert Adair's novel, is a co-production with France. It features a brilliant performance by John Hurt, who plays a widower/novelist who doesn't like anything modern—or as we call it hereabouts, "high-tech"—until he goes to the movies and falls in love with a B-movie star ("Beverly Hills 90210" alumnus Jason Priestley).

He develops an obsession and flies all the way from England to sleepy Chesterton, Long Island in the US to track the actor down. This bittersweet tale of love and loneliness won Best First Film honors in 1998 (New York Film Critics), and citations from the BAFTA and the Chicago Film Festival.

This movie features beautiful cinematography by Oliver Curtis that mirrors the film's emotional mood and psychological tone.

Similarities

But we can't brush off its similarities with and paralleisms to Luchino Visconti's 1971 film, "Death in Venice" (about a dying composer obsessed with a teenage boy), a movie we saw in the '80s, and Bill Condon's "Gods and Monsters" (1998), where a dying Ian McKellen is drawn to a handsome but simple gardener, played by Brendan Fraser.

David Kane's "Born Romantic," which we saw on VCD, may be the most flawed of the lot, but it does have its own charms, not least of which are the performances of its likable cast, and well-shot images of London by French cinematographer Robert Alazraki.

Kane is known for his ensemble cast, *a la* Robert Altman and Woody Allen. But the similarities stop there.

This movie's episodic plot revolves around three young men (notably, Anglo-Indian Jimi Mistry, predicted to break out in mainstream films anytime soon, whose film, "The Guru," a huge British hit, will be shown locally this year), pursuing three beautiful women across London.

They are a lounge lothario who gets attracted to a cynical art historian; a failed musician who seeks to rekindle relations with the bride he jilted eight years earlier; and a dyslexic mugger who finds himself drawn to a pretty graveyard attendant. The plot unspools to salsa music. Problem is, neither gent knows how to dance.

One unfortunate plot device utilized was the all-knowing, eternally-somber, world-weary character of the cabbie who was used to weave all three stories together. *(To be concluded)*

Walking the line, Manila Water-style

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

SINCE taking over the distribution of water supply and sewerage services in the east zone of Metro Manila, the Ayala-led Manila Water Co. has been working overtime to create a new corporate culture.

Employees

Five years into Asia's biggest utility privatization, Manila Water's 1,500-plus employees—98 percent of whom are all former MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Services) clock-punching bureaucrats—are now transformed. They make up a proud army of "knowledge-workers" who are empowered to make decisions aimed at making their customers' lives better.

Nowhere is this transformation more evident than on Manila Water's monthly "Agos Kalinga" day. Held toward the end of each month, the "sweep" as it is popularly called by MWC employees, involves everybody—from company president Tony Aquino down to the last meter-reader and leak repair crewman.

Barangays

Donning white T-shirts with the ubiquitous "We Care" logo, the Manila Water gang fans out across the various barangays covered by the company's seven Business Areas, and goes on a methodical house-to-house campaign. The objective: to find out how MWC's service (or the lack of it) impacts on their customers, particularly in the depressed communities where over 75 percent of Manila Water's customers live.

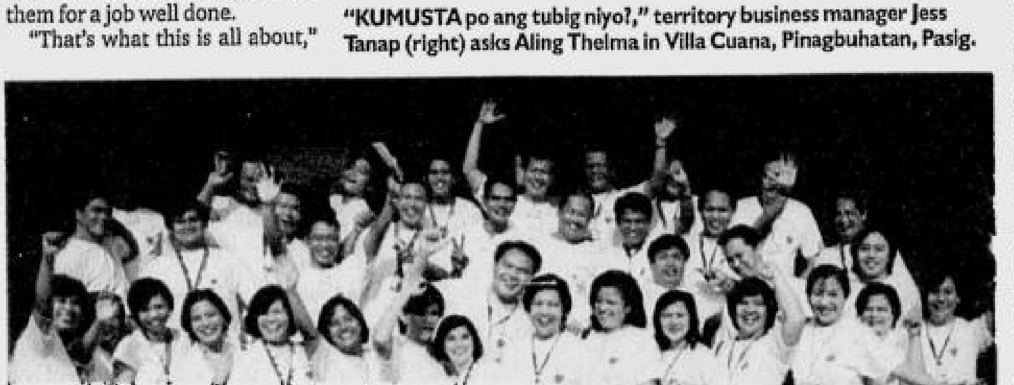
Rewards

For many Manila Water employees, the tangible rewards of the "sweep" are more evident—and satisfying—when their customers congratulate them for a job well done.

"That's what this is all about," says Pasig business area manager Allan Patdu. "Our customers need to know that we care for them. In the Nawasa days, customers had to line up at the head office to file their complaints, and would usually get shunted from one desk to another. Now, the company goes to them."

Contact Mandy at 522-5185 or 89 and 5221905 or CF 0916-7060-130.

"KUMUSTA po ang tubig niyo?," territory business manager Jess Tanap (right) asks Aling Thelma in Villa Cuana, Pinagbuhatan, Pasig.



SHOWING THEY CARE: Manila Water's Pasig business area team before "sweeping" their territory. Heading the upbeat bunch is Pasig business area head Allan Patdu (first row, center).

Bookmakers pick 'Chicago' as Oscar favorite

ZETA-JONES. Tipped for best supporting actress for her performance in Rob Marshall's musical.

LOS ANGELES—Las Vegas and London are betting on "Chicago" for the Oscars this year.

Bookmakers in Nevada and Britain picked the murder-musical as the odds-on favorite to win best movie honors for 2002 within hours of the announcement Tuesday morning in Beverly Hills of nominations for this year's Academy Awards.

Best actress?

Nicole Kidman is tipped to take the best actress award for her portrayal of writer Virginia Woolf in "The Hours," oddsmakers at Bally's casino in Las Vegas and bookmaker Ladbrokes in England said on Tuesday.

Jack Nicholson, who plays a retired insurance executive searching for meaning in life in "About Schmidt," is expected to finish the best actor race a nose ahead of Daniel Day-Lewis, who starred in "Gangs of New York." Martin Scorsese is the best director favorite for "Gangs," about 19th century gang wars in lower Manhattan.

But Ladbrokes sees "The Hours" director Stephen Daldry as having a good chance, at 11-4, while Bally's puts Daldry at 10-1 and sees Oscar-newcomer Rob Marshall, the director of "Chicago," as the top challenger, at 9-5.

Sports desk

Setting odds on the Oscar race is just fun in Las Vegas, said John Avello, who runs the sports desk for casinos Bally's and Paris Las Vegas.

"Someone will know who the winners are before the winners are announced," he said. For that reason, taking bets on the Academy Awards is illegal in the United States, even in Las Vegas.

Bets on the Oscars are legal in Britain, though.

Ladbrokes made "Chicago" a 4-7 favorite for best picture, citing Oscar nominations in 13 categories and the new popularity of the musical genre, thanks to last year's "Moulin Rouge." "The Hours" is second pick, at 5-2.

"Gangs of New York," "The Pianist", which follows a Polish pianist who escapes Nazi death camps, and fantasy epic "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" are longshots by comparison.

Catherine Zeta Jones is tipped for best supporting actress for her work in "Chicago" and Bally's Avello chose Paul Newman, for his work in "Road to Perdition" to beat out Chris Cooper, who played an orchid poacher in "Adaptation", as best supporting actor.

Sentimental favorite

"Newman is a sentimental favorite," Avello said. He says most years he calls four out of the six top categories. "There is always room for a longshot to win," he said.

His longest shots, both 25-1, are for Pedro Almodovar to win best director for "Talk to Her" and Christopher Walken to land best supporting actor for "Catch Me If You Can." The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will present its 75th annual awards show on Sunday, March 23, at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood. The event will be broadcast live on the ABC television network. *Reuters*

'CATCH ME IF YOU CAN'

Penchant for self-reinvention

By Nestor U. Torre

DICAPRIO. His character is forced to live by his wits at a very early age.

"CATCH Me If You Can" is directed by Steven Spielberg and co-stars Tom Hanks, but the film is "owned" by Leonardo DiCaprio, who plays the plum role of teen master con man Frank Abignale Jr.

Precocious career

The role is both meaty and daunting because DiCaprio is onscreen for most of the movie, and keeps changing occupations. That's right, in the course of his precocious career as a con man, Frank passes himself off as a teacher, an airline pilot, a doctor and a lawyer.

Each time he shifts identities, DiCaprio has to make appropriate adjustments in his looks and behavior, and that isn't easy to do.

As he shifts from one falsified character to the next, DiCaprio also has to make Frank's true personality comprehensible to viewers. This is a tall order because he's very complicated.

Only child

As the film helpfully shares, Frank is the only child of an ex-GI (Christopher Walken) and a lovely Frenchwoman (Nathalie Baye). When we first meet Frank Sr., we see right away where Frank Jr. has gotten his penchant for self-reinvention.

Unfortunately, the father's larcenous ways don't serve him well, so both his business and his marriage collapse. Forced to choose between his mother and his father, both of whom he loves, Frank Jr. runs away from home and is thus forced to live by his wits at a very early age.

Insightful filmmaker

Being the insightful filmmaker he is, Steven Spielberg isn't about to settle for the obvious and stereotypical, so we get original characters and unique relationships that encourage us to think more seriously about the issues raised by the film.

This is not just a movie about a clever con man who's chased and ultimately caught by the determined FBI check fraud expert played by Hanks.

The film also has a lot to say about people who live in a world of larcenous fantasy, the general public's gullibility, and the ties that can unexpectedly bind criminals and the law-enforcement officers who are out to get them.

Elusive prey

Take the relationship between the characters played by DiCaprio and Hanks: At first, Hanks just wants to get his elusive prey behind bars, but as the chase intensifies, he finds a lot in the young man to sympathize with, and even like.

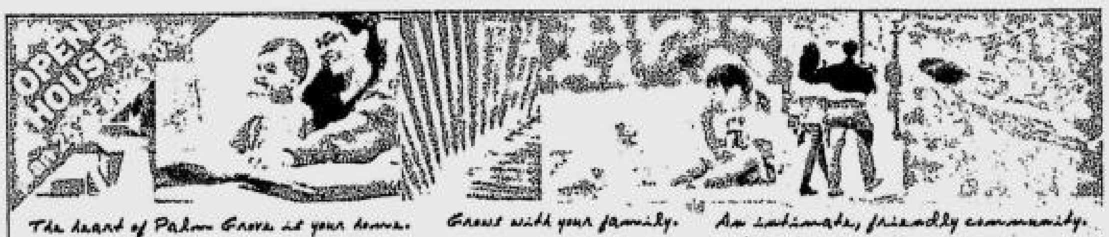
In a sense, they are strangely similar, and are bonded by the lonely lives they both lead. This unexpected bond adds another dimension to the film that makes it more than just a cat-and-mouse caper.

Versatile

Hanks does well as DiCaprio's "empathizing nemesis," but it's Leonardo who breaks through here as a versatile young-adult star. "Titanic" gave him superstardom, but his demanding role in "Catch Me If You Can" enables DiCaprio to show his competence at a variety of thespic approaches—the mark of potential greatness.

In his early movies, DiCaprio played off-targent characters that proved his dramatic intensity and penchant for risktaking. In his latest starrer, he does not only drama but also comedy, and allows viewers to share in the inspired madness of a larcenous mind.

That's no mean feat, but the young actor has pulled it off with a grin and a wink. Other young-adult stars will have to hustle harder to catch him—if they can!



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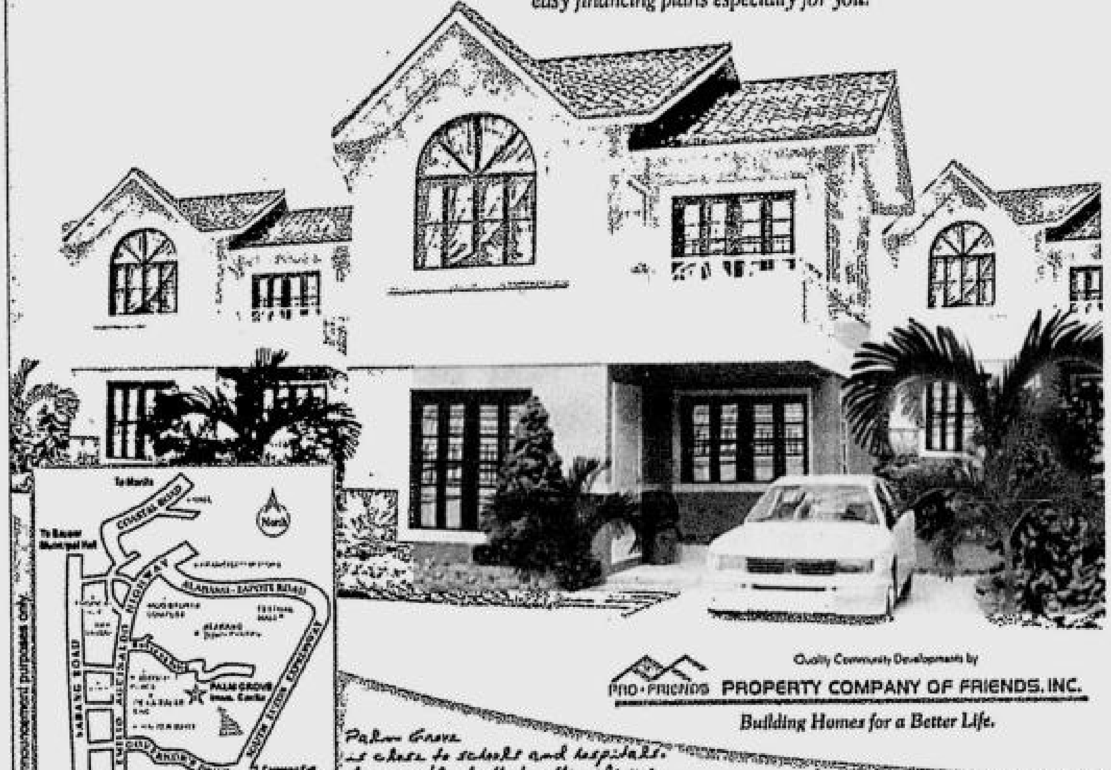

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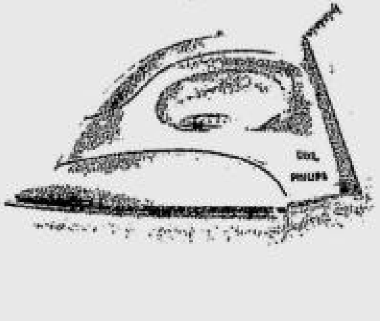

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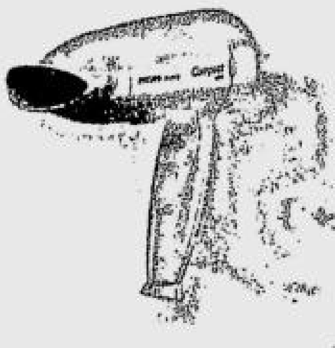

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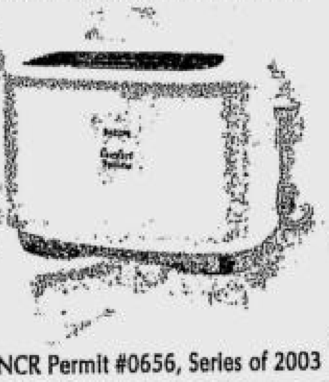

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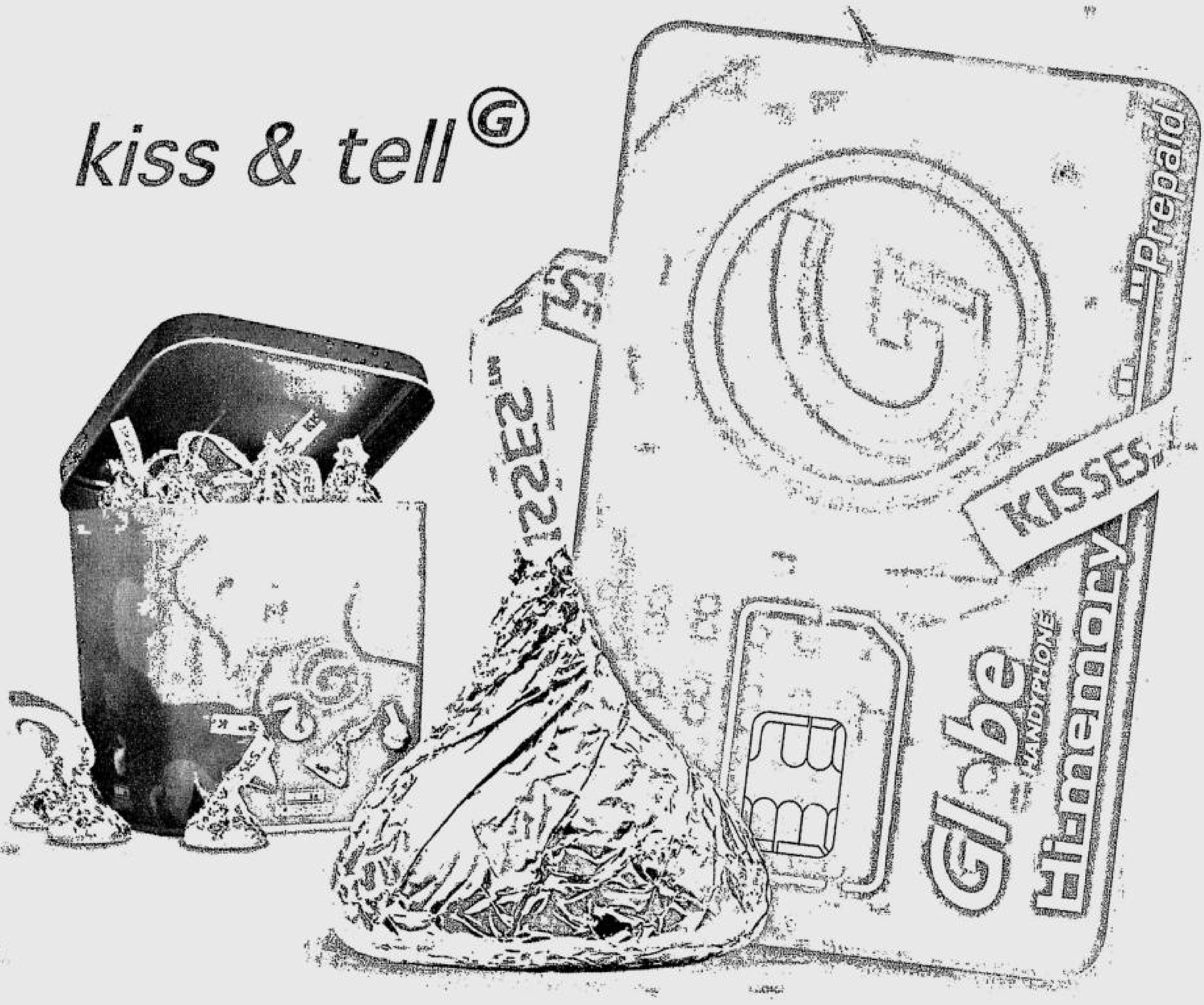

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SATURDAY Special

DIRECTOR Zhang Yimou (center) with actresses Maggie Cheung (left) and Zhang Ziyi at a press conference in Berlin.

'Hero' in the running for Berlinale top prize

BERLIN—"Hero," a Chinese martial arts epic that has already smashed box office records in its home country, is in the running for the Golden Bear top prize of the Berlin film festival.

Uneasy allies

The film features Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung, who lit up the screen as lovers in the international hit "In the Mood for Love," and action star Jet Li as uneasy allies in a legendary plot to kill the King of Qin in the Third Century BC.

The $31-million production is a story of love, honor and betrayal made by Zhang Yimou, best-known for dramas such as "Raise the Red Lantern" and "Red Sorghum," which won the 1988 Golden Bear.

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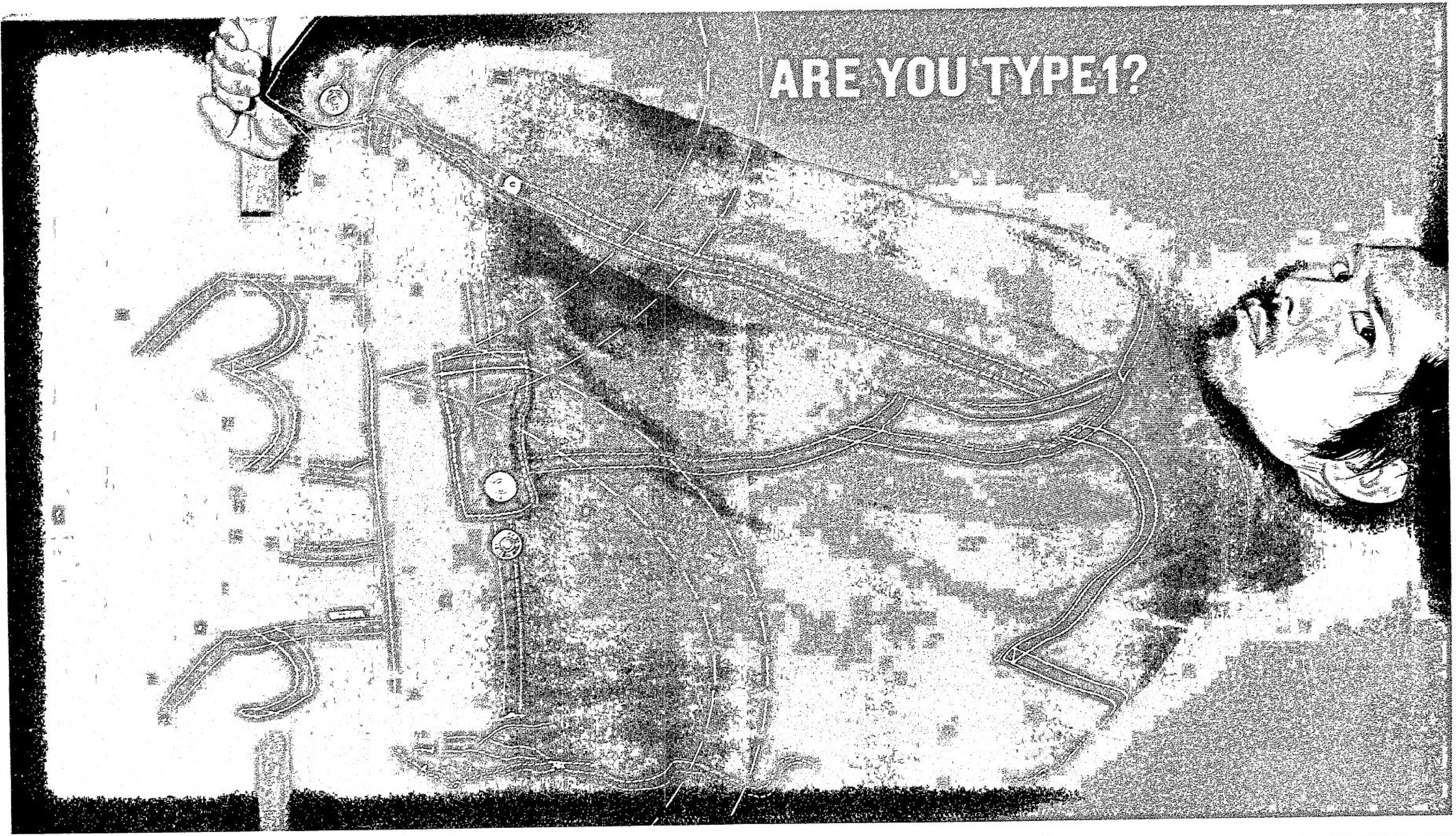
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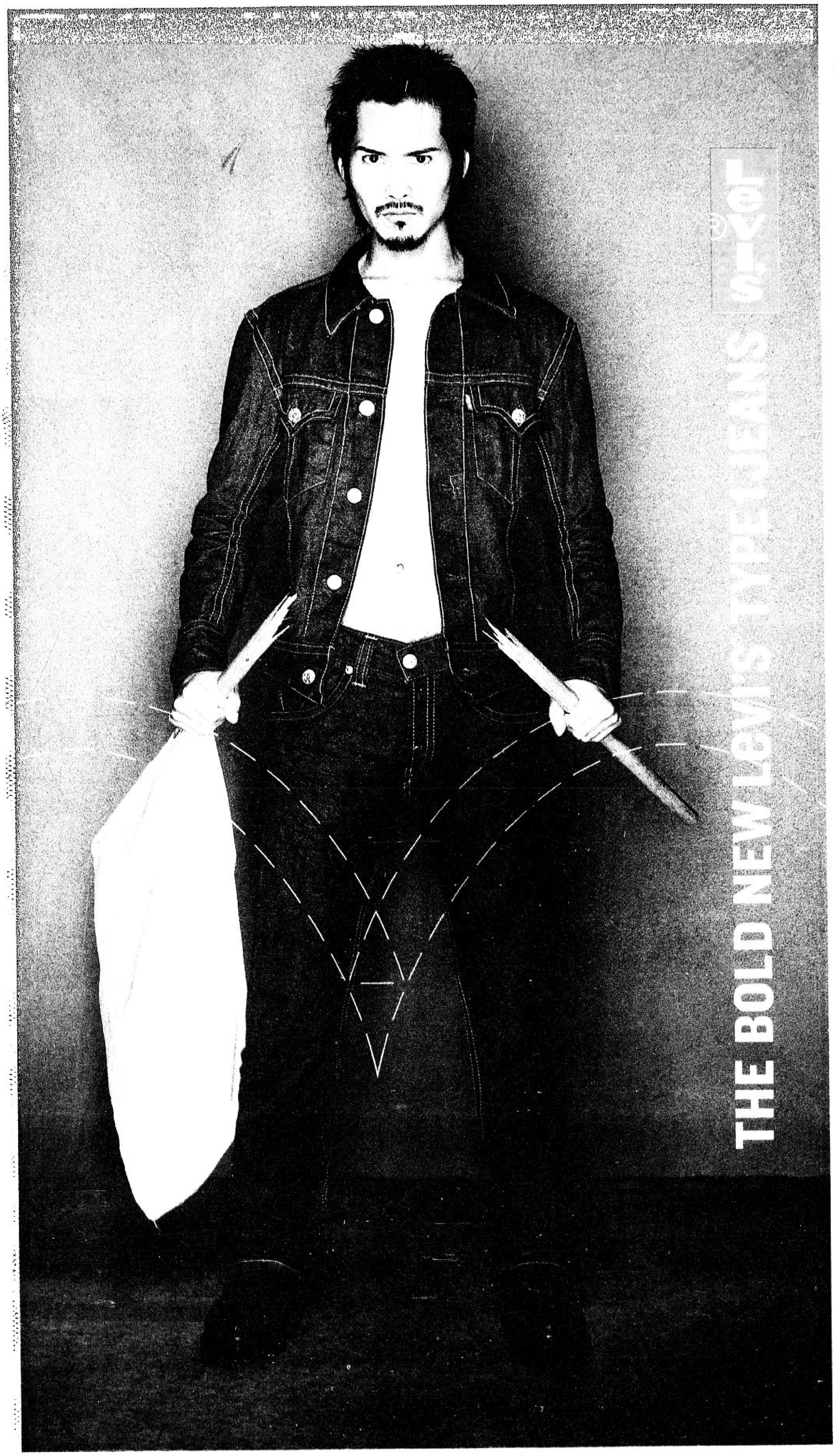
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Catching up

FACE TO FACE

Inday Badiday

DEAR Clara,

I've been out of commission for two weeks—certain things needed more attention than others—and I've got a little catching up to do.

First season

I'd like to express my thanks to everybody supporting my new show—"Inday, Heart to Heart"—on GMA-7, which, starting tomorrow, will occupy the 10:30-11:30 a.m. Sunday slot. We are nearing the end of our first season and, despite the birth pains of the first episodes, the show has gained the patronage of televiewers—and GMA has signed us up for another season.

Of course, I'd like to make special mention of my inexhaustible source of inspiration, my producer and No. 1 rah-rah girl Kitchie Benedicto-Paulino and her indefatigable daughter Tintin, my director Bert de Leon who takes very good care of my angles, shots and lighting, and my writers Bibeth Orteza and Ansel Beluso .

Guests

My eternal gratitude also goes to my guests who have been very generous with their time and life stories. Tomorrow, we're having the Star for All Seasons herself, Mayor Vilma Santos. We motored all the way to Lipa City for this very casual but intimate one-on-one with a friend.

In succeeding episodes, we shall feature the flawless sexy actress Rosanna Roces, the very game and witty Edu Manzano, the irrepressible Amalia Fuentes, and the one and only megastar, Ms Sharon Cuneta.

By the way, Clara, there's this thing that has been nagging me for two weeks now, and I'd like to issue a correction, if I may. In my last letter to you about your cousin Kara and her bout with the Big C, I mentioned that her mom, your Tita Letty, is very prayerful, and when our dad, your Lolo Nich, went to the Korean War, she bargained with God that she wouldn't wear make-up until such time that God had brought him safely back to us.

I cited that anecdote to point out that, if Letty was able to offer her little vanity up for Dad, for sure, she offered God so much more for her daughter to be healed. Imagine then my dismay when told that, upon reading that part of my column, your Tita Letty's *balae*, former Judge Federico Alikpala Jr., quipped in jest, "If Letty already wore make-up at the time of the Korean War, she must be older than me."

Wit

I was mortified. To think that Judge Alikpala, whose sharp wit has not been dulled by age, is already in his 70s. Definitely, definitely, Letty is a lot lot younger than that! Well, if truth be told, my dear Clara, it wasn't really make-up that your Tita Letty had to give up for one year, but the baby powder that she used to freshen up her face.

Now that that's out of the way, I'd also like to tell you about the little meeting I went to a week back—with Mrs. Imelda Romualdez-Marcos. The former first lady must have been missing her friends from the entertainment world. She was as elegant as ever in her pink tunic. And she was as profoundly esoteric as ever, too—as she spoke on and on about the problems of the country and of the world, and how peace can only be achieved by the love that we need to give to one another because all of us, including George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein, are one.

Then, she gave each of us red shirts with these words emblazoned both in front and at the back: *"Kilusang Magmahalan Tayo—Nanay."* Now, please don't ask me, Clara, what Madam is up to. Whatever it is, I love her for it. After all, who can argue against the need for love to solve our problems?

Before I forget, Clara, I'd also like to tell you about how proud I was of you because of the way you carried yourself during your prom night.

Again, I was more excited than you were—just like when you were in your junior year. Early on, I really saw to it that everything was alright—from your lovely Venus-cut, yellow chiffon gown with sequined bodice, to your matching shoes and bag and the cute little clips that accented your hair.

But then, you know what happened—when you finally put the gown on, it didn't fit well, and you could hardly breathe. I naturally panicked. I rushed to the couturier's shop and—God smiled at me!—I saw this beautiful formal top which should go very well with your gown. What I had in mind was for you to wear it so that you could loosen up and be more comfortable.

MAYOR Vilma Santos (center) with Ansel Beluso (left) and Bibeth Orteza.

I then rushed to where your prom was being held to look for you. As I marched triumphantly towards you, I saw you smile as if you didn't have a care in the world. And when I told you to come with me to the dressing room to put on the top I bought, you softly but firmly declined.

Crisis

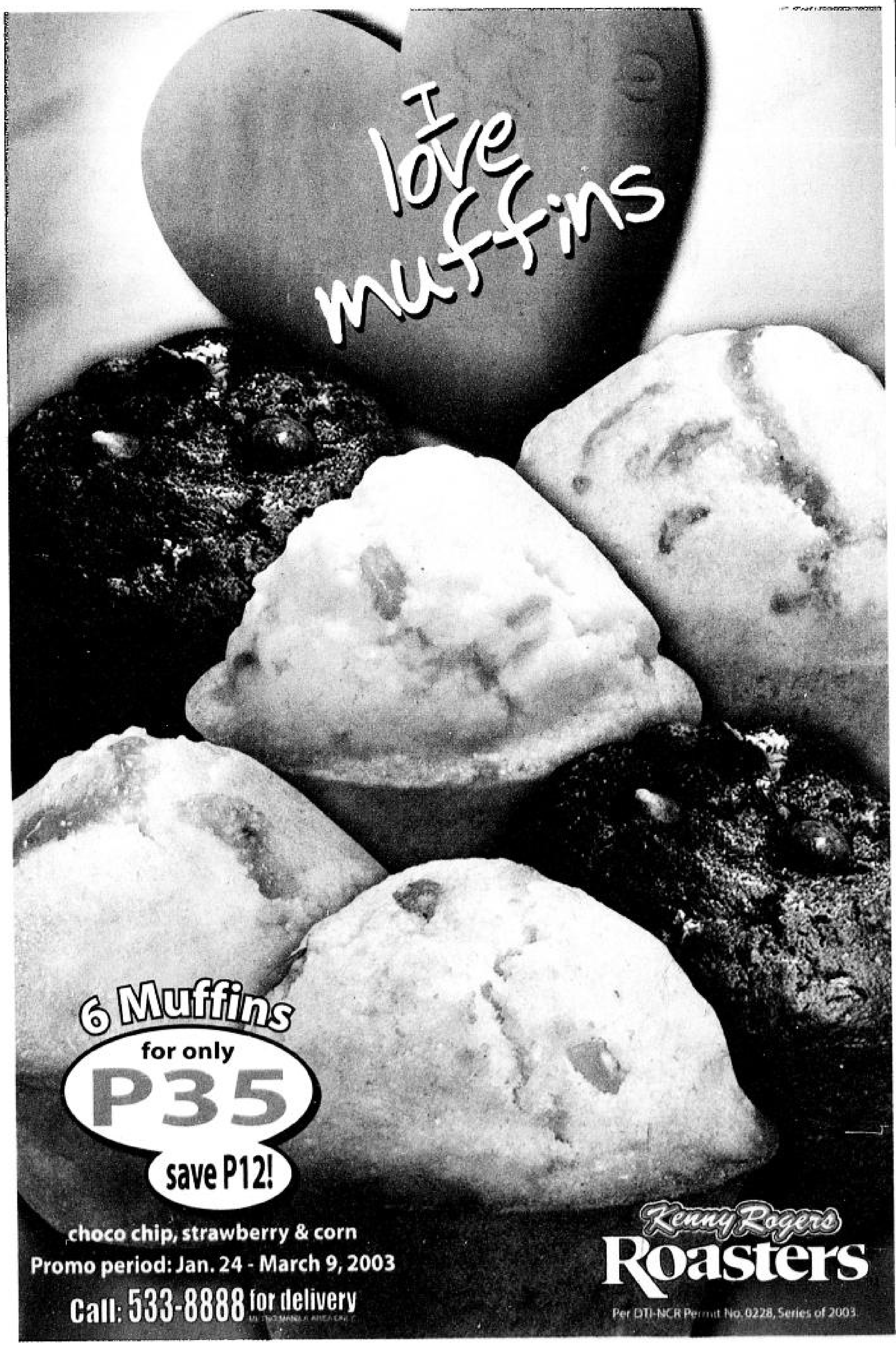
At first, I wanted to force you to follow what I wanted you to do. But then, I realized you were dealing with the crisis much better than I was. I mean, if I were going to the prom and my gown didn't fit, I'd have thrown a fit! And I'd have decided to stay home and mope for a whole month!

But you were made of better stuff: You took it all in stride. You simply didn't allow your ill-fitting gown to dampen your excitement. You just breathed and ate less. And as I watched you on the dance floor that night, I swear, you were the most beautiful young lady there.

My dear Clara, you again taught me a valuable lesson in life. Indeed, sometimes, no matter what we do, things can still go haywire. But the measure of a person is not in how well she prepares for everything to go right, but in how gracefully she stands up and moves on after everything goes wrong.

Clara, you have passed the test I'd surely have failed. I salute you. You're doing well, my precious child!

CLARA (center) with classmates and friends at the prom.



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Razzies dis-honor underachievers for Film Year 2002

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

MADONNA. Frequent Worst Actress "awardee."

OUR Q&A for this week:

From Nellia Aronila of Pamplona, Las Pinas, **"My favorite actors are the more mature ones, Tommy Lee Jones and Jeff Goldblum. I am curious how they looked when they were younger. What movies did they start in?"**

Tommy Lee Jones was billed "Tom Lee Jones" when he started making films via the sappy 1970 romantic drama, "Love Story." Jeff Goldblum, on the other hand, started his film career playing a despicable kidnapper and rapist in "Death Wish."

From Renato Jacinto of Davao del Norte, **"I enjoy your little-known trivia on movies. Why not feature awards given by those unique groups like Rotten Tomatoes and the Razzies?"**

Before we find out who gets the film world's most coveted golden statuette, the Oscar, on March 23, the Golden Raspberry Awards, "affectionately" called the Razzies, will "dis-honor" last year's most notorious underachievers one day before the Academy Awards. The actual value of a Razzie trophy? $4.89!

Madonna may yet add another "feather" to her acting cap this year. So far, she has won four "Worst Actress of the Year" awards, plus the "coveted" "Worst Actress of the Century" from the Razzies (which started giving out awards in 1980).

Entry

Her entry this year is husband Guy Ritchie's remake of Lina Wertmuller's (the first female director to be nominated in the Oscar Best Director category) classic, "Swept Away." Other actresses in the list are: Angelina Jolie ("Life or Something Like It"); Britney Spears ("Crossroads"); Winona Ryder ("Mr Deeds") and Jennifer Lopez (for "Enough" and "Maid in Manhattan"). J. Lo was also nominated for two films last year, but lost out to Mariah Carey ("Glitter"). Oh, singers!

Eddie Murphy leads the list of actors, with his box-office clunker, "The Adventures of Pluto Nash."

(The film was made for $85 million and earned a measly $5 million. Similarly, even "Showtime" and "I-Spy" bombed at the tills).

Others in the list with Murphy are: Razzie favorite Steven Seagal ("Half Past Dead"); Roberto Benigni ("Pinocchio"); Adriano Giannini, who took on the role originated by his legendary father, Giancarlo ("Swept Away"), and 1999 "Worst Actor" winner, Adam Sandler, for two films: "8 Crazy Nights" and "Mr. Deeds."

Cannes favorite

Sandler, however, redeems himself with his breakthrough performance in Paul Anderson's Cannes favorite, "Punch Drunk Love."

For the "Worst Supporting" categories, the nominees are: (Actor) Hayden Christensen ("Star Wars, Ep. 2"); Tom Green ("Stealing Harvard"); Freddie Prinze Jr. ("Scooby Doo"); Robin Williams ("Death to Smoochy") and Christopher Walken ("The Country Bears").

It's a good thing Walken came up with a touching performance in Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can," so he more than makes up for the slip.

Actress: Lara Flynn Boyle ("Men in Black 2"); Natalie Portman ("Star Wars, Ep. 2"); Rebecca Romijn-Stamos ("Rollerball") former Razzie favorite Bo Derek ("Master of Disguise") and, again, Madonna ("Die Another Day"). Eat your heart out, Julianne Moore!

While "Pinocchio," "Pluto Nash," "Star Wars, Ep. 2," "Crossroads" and "Swept Away" fight it out for the "Worst Film" dis-honor, a slew of box-office winners slug it out for the Razzies' newest category, "Most Flatulent Teen Film": "XXX;" "Jackass;" "Crossroads;" "8 Crazy Nights" and "Scooby Doo." Yabba-dabba-doo!

'Hero' in the running . . . .

From page D1

The characters, true to their mythical status in Chinese culture, fly through the air, defeat armies single-handedly with a swing of their blade and deflect hailstorms of enemy arrows with the force of their will.

Although set in early days, women receive equal time on the sword, and fight valiantly alongside their companions.

The action comes in whirls of color, with stages of the flashback narration set in shifting hues of red, blue and green.

Common enemy

The common enemy of the trio—Broken Sword, Flying Snow and Nameless—is the King of Qin, who became the first Chinese emperor and the man who built the Great Wall.

The film marks Zhang's first foray into genre cinema, which he said allowed him to bring a new perspective to the familiar stories of Chinese legend.

"I wanted to set the film in a much earlier era so I could inject my own ideas about how things looked," Zhang told the Berlinale magazine Screen.

"I did not want to slavishly copy the history books." "Hero" is one of 22 film competing for the Golden Bear, to be awarded by an international jury Feb. 15.

The film, which was produced by the makers of Academy Award-winner "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," is set for worldwide release by Miramax later this year. *AFP*

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph
SATURDAY Special

Kidman says own turmoil boosted Woolf performance

By Erik Kirschbaum

KIDMAN. Golden Globe winner for best actress in a drama. AFP

BERLIN—Nicole Kidman said on Sunday the turmoil in her private life helped prepare her for a widely applauded role as suicidal British novelist Virginia Woolf.

Fairytale marriage

Kidman's fairytale marriage to actor Tom Cruise had just collapsed, she suffered a subsequent miscarriage and was being plagued by a stalker when she started playing the despondent Woolf in "The Hours." "This role came along when I needed to play her," Kidman, 35, said at a news conference after the film's international premiere got enthusiastic applause at the Berlin Film Festival.

"The Hours" has triumphed at US box offices and become a top candidate for a rich harvest of Academy Awards next month.

"I was raw enough and open enough to play it," said Kidman, who won the Golden Globe award for best actress in a drama last month that made her a favorite for an Academy Award in March.

Reason

"It wasn't a therapy," the flame-haired Australian actress said. "But I think things come along at times in your life for a reason. Roles fall into your lap at certain times when it's meant to happen. I was lucky to have this role at this time."

Directed by Stephen Daldry, "The

KIDMAN/ E2

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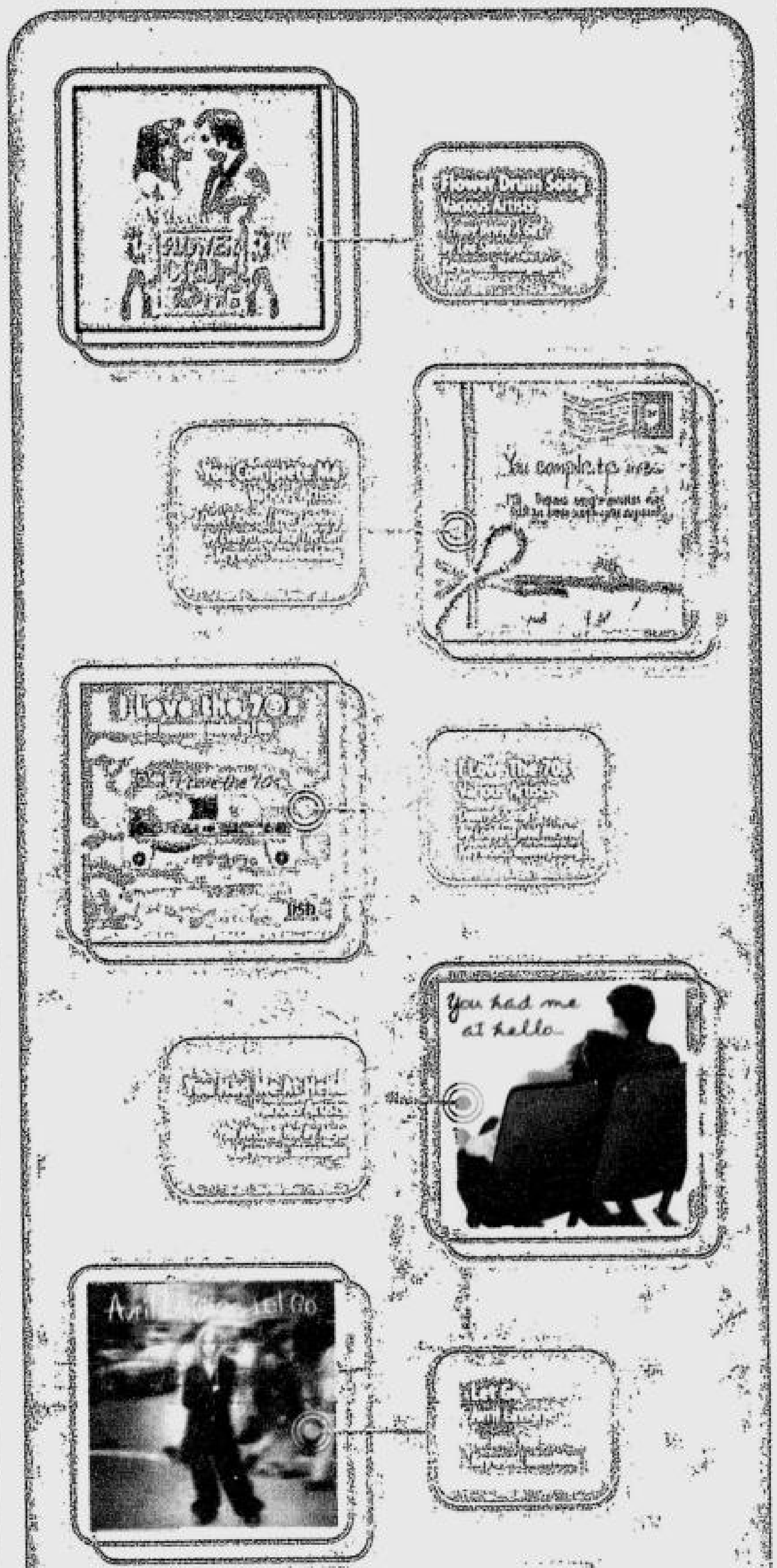

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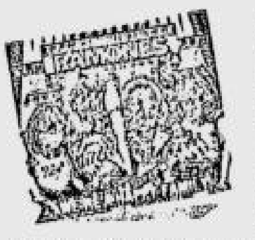

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50 years after golden age, Mexican films shine

By Adriana Valdes

MEXICO CITY—Half a century after the end of its golden age, the Mexican film industry was back in the international spotlight on Tuesday with record Oscar nominations for three Mexicans.

"Mexican cinema, as it was a long time ago, is now on international platforms, better than ever," said Pedro Armendariz, head of the Mexican Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences.

Success

But, unused to Mexican success in Hollywood, filmmakers and actors played down the chances of the films "Y Tu Mama Tambien" and "El Crimen del Padre Amaro" or actress Salma Hayek taking a statuette at the Academy Awards March 23.

"The competition is very tough, the Zhang Yimou film ("Hero") is very strong and good," Carlos Carrera, director of "El Crimen del Padre Amaro" (The Crime of Father Amaro), told Reuters.

Hayek became the first Mexican woman in the Oscars' 75-year history to be nominated for best actress.

Her performance in "Frida," a portrait of angst-ridden Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, has been widely criticized in Mexico as lightweight.

Fame

"I don't think Salma Hayek makes a good Frida. She was only chosen because of her fame in Hollywood," said Leonor Bahnsen, a visitor to Kahlo's former home in Mexico City.

The blue house, which Kahlo shared with muralist and fellow communist Diego Rivera, is now a museum.

Bahnsen was skeptical that Hayek, who performed in "Wild Wild West," would beat out the likes of nominees Nicole Kidman and Renee Zellweger on Oscar night.

"They only ever give prizes to the gringos, not Mexicans," she said, using a slang term for English speakers.

The last Mexican actress nominated for an Oscar was Katy Jurado for her supporting role as Spencer Tracy's stubborn Indian wife in "Broken Lance" in 1954.

That was at the tail end of the 20-year period referred to as the golden age of Mexican cinema, when fiery actresses like Dolores del Rio and Maria Felix stomped across the black-and-white screens. Leading men, often haughty and macho, included Jorge Negrete and Pedro Infante.

Extremely popular

Mexican cinema was extremely popular in Latin American and Spanish movie theaters until US blockbusters began to force them out of the market in the 1950s.

The Mexican film industry declined in the 1960s and 1970s, churning out cheesy, low-budget sex-and-violence movies.

The recent crop of Mexican movies have raised some hackles in this mostly Roman Catholic country of 100 million people.

The church has slammed "El Crimen del Padre Amaro," in which a priest seduces a 16-year-old girl, as offensive to Catholics.

"Y Tu Mama Tambien," nominated this year for best original screenplay, raised a few eyebrows in Mexico for its sexual content. It deals with a love triangle between two Mexican youths and a Spanish woman. Both films star Gael Garcia.

Reuters

HAYEK (left) with "Frida" director Julie Taymor. AFP

Michael Jackson protests unfair treatment in docu

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST Feb. 3, a documentary titled "Living with Michael Jackson," was telecast on British television. It was the product of eight months of work on the part of journalist Martin Bashir, who shot footage of Jackson and his family in different parts of the world.

Revelations

In the documentary, Jackson made some revelations that added to the controversy already swirling around him. He admitted that he had shared his bed at his Neverland ranch with children—but insisted that nothing even remotely sexual took place.

Indeed, Jackson's followers stoutly defend him from such malicious innuendoes. They describe him as a pure soul who is drawn to the similarly innocent nature of children, and his relationship with them stops there.

JACKSON. Pure soul?

Another bone of public contention is Jackson's three children, Prince and Paris by his ex-wife Debbie Rowe, and baby "Blanket" by an unknown woman.

Weird

Some people think it's weird that Jackson covers their faces in veils and masks, but he explains that he's doing it to foil possible kidnapping attempts.

People also raised a howl when Jackson recently dangled one of his children over a balcony. They protested that the "prank" had put the child's life in danger, but Jackson said he had only shown the boy in response to the pleas of his fans on the street below.

No way would he put the life of any child in peril, so could the excessively concerned public get off his case and look for other, more important causes to champion?

Plastic surgery

What about his "famous" nose, and all the plastic surgery that has reportedly been done on it through the years? These days, it looks unnaturally pointed, and rumor has it that it's been surgically worked on so much that it has been grievously weakened—which could be why Jackson often covers his face with a surgical mask.

No truth to the rumor at all, Jackson said. He admitted to only two surgeries to his nose, performed not for neurotically aesthetic reasons, but to make for better breathing, and thus for better singing.

After the controversial documentary was aired, Jackson protested its unfair treatment of him, and charged that Bashir did not comply with several assurances he had made. What did other people think?

Analysts

On CNN last Feb. 7, media analysts opined that *both* Jackson and Bashir had come across as "weird" in the documentary. They rapped Bashir for using "every nasty trick that inverviewers have, with none of the enlightenment."

They decried his trying to ingratiate himself with Jackson so he could disarm the star into making candid revelations that would boost the show's "scoop" factor.

They rapped his "craven way of asking questions," making the most ticklish questions appear to come from "other people," and lectured Bashir by pointing out, "You must have the conviction of your own questions."

As for Jackson, they characterized him as "deeply creepy, not entirely all there."

Huge viewership

And yet, the documentary drew a huge viewership-15 million people! By comparison, a recent special on Saddam Hussein was watched by only 1.5 million viewers, despite Iraq's being very much on many people's minds these days.

"Why do we have this "fascination with the grotesque?" the media analysts asked. Rather exaggeratedly, they lumped Jackson with other famous "grotesques" like the Elephant Man. Come on, Jacko may sometimes be "wacko," but he isn't *that* bizarre.

The analysts pointed out that, despite his erratic behavior in his private life, Jackson was "an astonishingly talented performer." So, what's the connection?

The analysts' last word: Jackson is so gifted and wealthy that we *want* him to be flawed as well—because we don't want anybody to have it all. In other words, it's that old "idol with feet of clay" syndrome all over again. Oh.

More on juice cleansing

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

READERS have written to inquire more about juice cleansing, so here's added information:

First, we should understand how our bodies react to food and various situations. Here are some points to consider:

1. Juice fasting is a cleansing process and is not to be taken as a daily standard diet. You want to give your body a clean break and rest from regular meals so that it can cope with whatever backlog there is in the natural cleansing process.

For starters

There is no definite length of time for the fast. You may try it out for only two or three days for starters. When your body gets used to the process, you may extend it.

However, if you are planning to go on long fasts, it would be helpful to have a doctor of alternative medicine supervise the process, especially if you have medical problems.

2. Choose a time when you will not be physically burdened with too much work or traveling. In this day and age, some people may wonder if they will ever find such a time. In the Philippines, however, we often have special vacations as a result of extended holidays.

Instead of overeating during those times, our bodies will surely appreciate a clean vacation as well. No overloads on the digestion system, no pollution and contamination from unhealthy eating, and certainly no killer activities such as drinking and smoking.

Internal cleansing

It will be good time to do some internal cleansing. While your body is undergoing the cleansing process, you also want it to rest and recharge.

3. Use the freshest and cleanest ingredients available. Go organic, go healthy. Powdered juices do not count as cleansing agents. They are loaded with sugar, artificial colors and preservatives. Natural foods make the best drinks.

Make your own juices from fruits and vegetables. You need a blender or a juicer. If you only have a blender, you may use mangoes, bananas, papayas, *guyabanos, caimitos, kamias*, grapes, etc. If you have a juicer, you may work with carrots, apples, pineapples, beets, celery, cucumber, etc. You may mix in some green leaves such as *malunggay* to add nourishment to your drink.

If you don't have a blender or juicer, you may resort to citrus drinks such as *dalanghita* juice, lemon juice, etc. You may also eat the fruits and vegetables without blending them—your mouth and stomach will do the job.

Ripe mango

There are some unique techniques to produce fruit juice. We know of people who mash ripe mango while the skin is intact. They roll the mango on a table and lightly press on it to soften the fruit. Then they open one end and squeeze out the contents. They "drink," as if sipping from a natural container, all the juicy flavors of the mango.

Herbal teas are fantastic drinks, and they can be bought from supermarkets. Examples of healing herbs are chamomile, spearmint and peppermint. We prefer herbal teas that have no caffeine. They are known to help the body become strong and healthy.

If imported herbals teas are expensive for you, you may buy some basil or spearmint plants and gather your ingredients fresh from the garden. If you are not into taking care of plants, you may want to purchase herbs from stalls in Quiapo or elsewhere. Sweeten your drinks with healing substances like honey or muscovado sugar.

4. Water is a great cleansing agent so don't forget to drink lots of it during the fasting period.

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Café Lupe is a fine place for dining and singing

By Andy P. Bais

METRO Manila's horrendous traffic condition is every motorist's nightmare. But to some lucky souls, it could lead to the realization of a dream.

Heavy traffic

Such was the case for Alvin Carranza, owner of Café Lupe Grill and Restaurant: his dream of putting up a restaurant was brought about by the heavy traffic at Edsa Guadalupe.

Alvin could have built his dream restaurant in any other place. But because of his billboard business, which is in Guadalupe, he thought of putting up his restaurant in the area.

The youthful restaurateur from Bacolod has been in the billboard business for the past 18 years. His outfit, Carranz Outdoor, is involved in producing, erecting and marketing photographic billboards—like the ones mushrooming along Edsa, and in strategic places in Cebu, Bacolod and Davao.

Higher awareness

For six years now, Alvin's outfit has been taking charge of the billboards being displayed at the towering structure in the Guadalupe area. The place is perfect for his business because Guadalupe has one of the heaviest traffic counts in the metropolis. The more people caught in traffic means higher awareness of the products being advertised in the billboards.

The space where the structure is located is huge, so Alvin thought of making good use of it—by putting up his dream restaurant under those billboards!

Café Lupe opened its doors to the public last April. Alvin describes his "baby" as a multi-level restaurant. "If you want casual dining, we have Texcalla, the outdoor area. *Kung gusto naman nila ng privacy*, we have three private rooms—the Guadalajara, Juan Diego and Rio Grande. Our garden area has a homey feel, and we also have our game area, the Avenida Epifanio de los Santos."

RESTAURANT owner Alvin Carranza (front center) with his staff.

Variety

Café Lupe offers a wide variety of dishes, a mixture of Mexican, Filipino and Ilonggo. It has Maritess Gutierrez, the daughter of the durable Gloria Romero, for its executive chef.

THE CAFÉ offers musical entertainment from Wednesday to Saturday.

Alvin says his restaurant is a manifestation of his devotion to the Lady of Guadalupe.

Last December, the Juan Diego Room was transformed into a piano bar where customers can jam with Ariel Rebadulla, the bar's talented pianist, or sing along with the singer *cum* host.

The piano bar is open from Wednesday to Saturday. Entertainers: on Wednesday, Joy Viado; Thursday, Michelle de Guzman; Friday is acoustic night with Jan "Lumen" Isaac; and Saturday features Queenie. On Feb. 22, Ladine Roxas will have a special show. Call 8992145.

Kidman says . . .

From page E1

Hours" is a complex movie, with three stories unfolding simultaneously in three time periods, featuring Kidman, Julianne Moore and Meryl Streep.

Reader

The film was based on Michael Cunningham's novel, which blends the life of Woolf and the writing of her breakthrough "stream of consciousness" novel "Mrs Dalloway" in 1925 with those of a reader on the brink of suicide in California in 1949—and with a modern-day Mrs Dalloway, performing decades later the same tasks as the novel's heroine in New York City.

Three stories describe the struggles of three women—all within a single day. The film begins with Woolf's real suicide in 1941 and weaves the tale of her battle against depression and mental illness into the other stories.

The movie is one of 22 competing for the "Golden Bear" award at the Berlinale, Europe's first major film showcase of the year.

Kidman has called the abrupt end of her 10-year marriage and the problems that followed a hell. She said she had already agreed to do the film and could not get out of it, even though she had no interest at the time in getting in front of a camera.

Isolated

"I pretty much isolated myself," Kidman said. "I lived in a cottage (during the filming), spent a lot of time alone, writing and reading . . . I'm not sure where the lines cross. Art and life mesh somewhere. It affected me and continues to affect me." Kidman said she did not meet Streep and Moore until after the film was finished, during a talk show.

Kidman said the film helped her work through the turbulence—and added she hoped to fall in love again.

"I have no idea what the criteria are," she said, when asked by a German reporter what sort of man she was looking for.

"Everybody wants to be swept off their feet, whatever. One day we'll see my Prince Charming—someone who makes me laugh."

Reuters

Love, the Martin and Pops way

By Edmund L. Sicam

YOU would think that after thousands of column inches and hours of airtime devoted to the Matin Nievera and Pops Fernandez break-up, people would already be tired of their story. After all, their marriage has been annulled and they've gone their separate ways in their professional and private lives.

Hopes

Their fans think otherwise, however. Each one still hopes that, eventually, Martin and Pops will be back in each other's arms. When Maximedia announced recently that the estranged couple was going to hold a Valentine concert at the Araneta Coliseum on Feb. 21 and 22 (the concert series actually starts today at the Waterfront hotel in Cebu City), I was sure they'd pack the Big Dome for a one-night-only concert, because fans would finally be able to see their favorite love team together on the same stage for the first time in seven years.

I wasn't too sure, however, if they'd be able to pull off SRO shows for two consecutive nights.

I was mistaken. Tickets for the Araneta show went really fast so Maximedia added another show on Feb. 28. Tickets to that are also selling briskly, so a matinee on Feb. 23 has been announced.

Martin explains the secret of their success: "We're a good team. No one will disagree with that. In the '80s, we were *the* love team, reel and real. She was known for her dance moves, while I'd do the ballads. It was a perfect combination."

Pops agrees, saying, "Even before that, it was the rapport that we had on 'Penthouse Live.' I think the magic is still there."

That is the other attraction of the concert: Fans want to know if the magic *is* still there. In the words of Martin, "They can now come to a conclusion on how this story should end. What should be the fate of this couple and their friendship?"

"Our concert will be like a story," says Pops, "a story within a story."

That story has to do with a romance that started on a TV show and played out in the tri-media all the way to the final breakup.

Changes

I asked the two what has changed in their lives as performers since they split up. To this and many other questions, Martin and Pops had contrasting answers:

Pops agreed wholeheartedly that there's been a big change. "It's been a good change. I've matured as a performer." Martin says there's been no change. He still sings from pure, raw emotion.

I noticed that Pops was more relaxed than her former husband. I could feel that Martin was still pining for her.

Speaking about their duets, Martins said, "It's never been hard to do them. There's always love involved. To sing a song with someone you've loved all your life should be no problem.

"We haven't done this in a long time. It's like learning to make love all over again. To see what I've learned, what she's learned, compare notes, experiment."

Elaborating on what she's learned from the entire experience, Pops said, "The love will always be there. When you experience problems, you always remember the painful parts. But I must admit we had wonderful years together. Aside from the fact that he's the father of my children, there will always be love and concern, no matter what happens.

"I will never say never, but if we go our separate ways, I will always love him and care for him. I will always defend him."

That really floored me because it meant Pops admitted that the two had *not* gone their separate ways.

Unconditional love

This encouraged Martin, who waxed romantic again: "Because of the love that we have for each other, and it's obvious that it's still there. It's so easy to do a love song. Whether or not I broke her heart a long time ago, my love for her is unconditional."

He added, "Without the intimate side of being a husband, I shall try to be the father to her kids because love now is more concern as opposed to jealousy. It's more leaving her alone but trying to put in my two cents' worth even if it's not needed.

"I trust her with her decisions in life. I try to be there just in case. When Pops has a problem, we call each other."

He recalled texting her once and she replied, "Why are you texting me?" He answered, "I have a feeling you're sad. Then Pops admitted, "Actually, I'm angry." "We can sense each other's feelings," he explained.

Is their relationship better now than when they were married?

Pop immediately said yes, observing that before, people pictured them as the perfect couple and she and Martin actually believed they were. There was a lot of pressure from their fans for them to have a perfect relationship.

Martin thought differently: "Today, I have moments of happiness. But I'm not complete. I think a complete man is one who has everything, a lot of values and scruples, not happy here, happy there, and pretending that this life is everything that is wonderful, but it's not.

"I think, when I had a family, those were the best years of my life. We went to church three times a week. Once I sat in the car and cried just looking at her. I can't remember being happier than that moment. The tears were never duplicated with whoever."

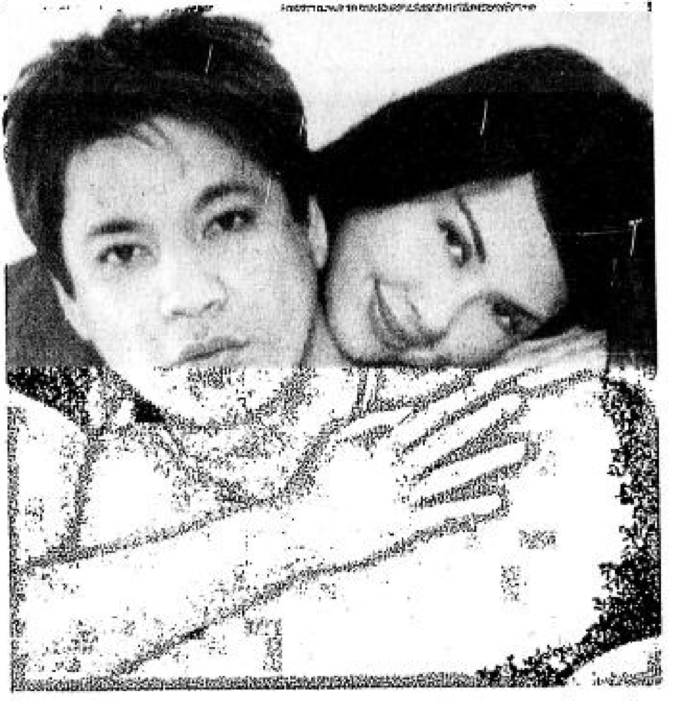
Forever

Finally, Martin gave his parting shot: "God has put us together for a reason. Whatever it is, it's a forever thing."

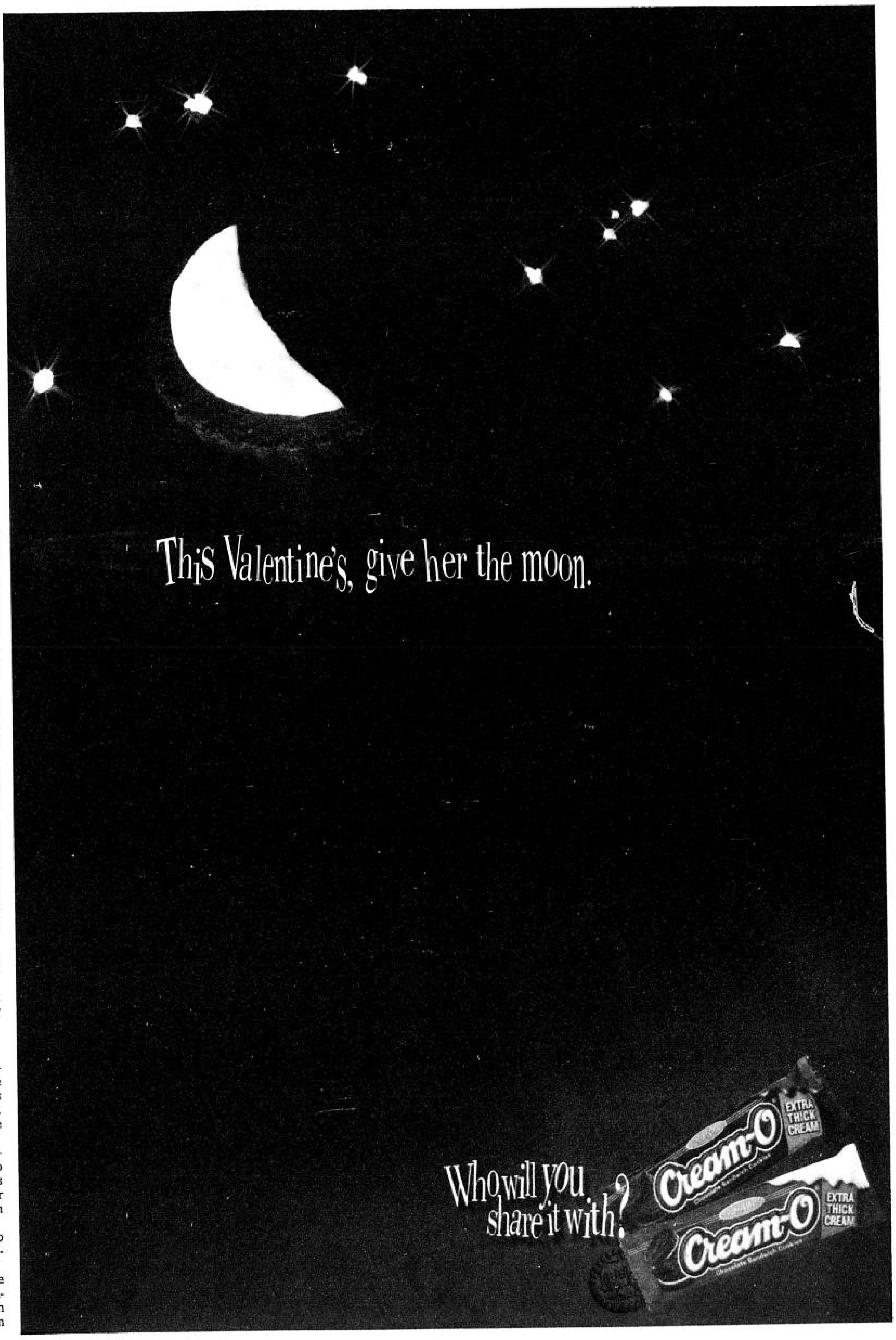
Pops, on the other hand, emphasized their not being together. "There's a reason we're no longer together. To individually mature more till we find ourselvés. There were things we wanted to do back then. We married young. We still have to experience those things, but separately."

The Martin-Pops story continues!

> This is the other attraction of the show: Fans want to know if the magic is still there. 'Our concert will be like a story,' Pops says, 'a story within a story'



NIEVERA AND FERNANDEZ. Back in each other's arms—but only for a series of Valentine shows.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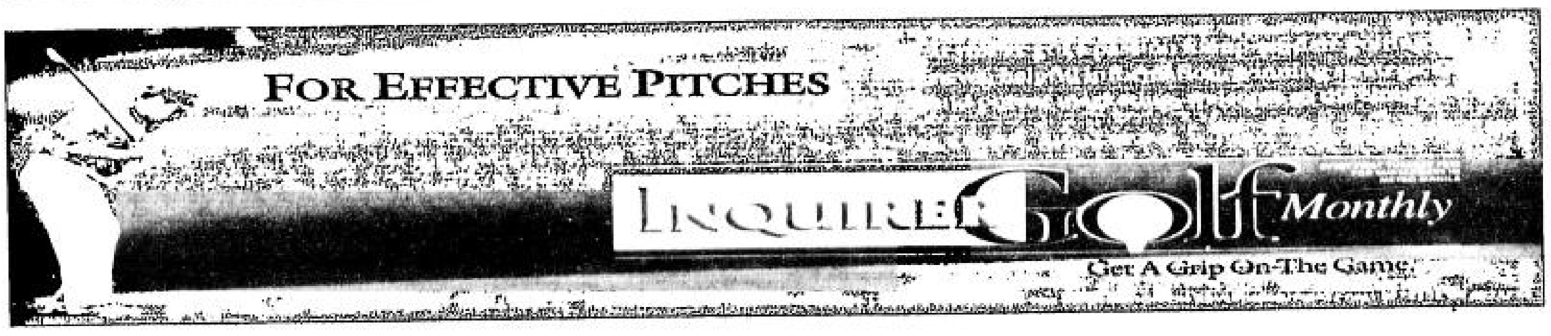

Anna
Fegi
EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

IN her debut album, Fegi's singing redeems even the cheesy cuts.

Ana Fegi has a distinctive voice

By Noelani Torre

WE'VE been seeing a great deal of Anna Fegi recently. Her wild mop of curls (and even wider smile) seem to confront us wherever we turn. She's doing shows everywhere, and already has an album (soon to be two) under her belt.

Visible

Still, though her name and face have been very visible of late, what we haven't been getting is more of her singing voice.

Her first solo album, "Anna Fegi: Every Step of the Way" (BMG), has 12 tracks. The R&B CD has her stamp from the very first track to the last. Fegi has a distinctive voice, light but tensile, and there's no questioning her impressively wide range.

Hers is a voice that has been honed by experience in musical theater. And she was a member of the iconic Smokey Mountain group.

It is evident from the album's first song, Louie Ocampo's "You and I," that Anna Fegi is a singer to reckon with. In this relatively simple song, she effortlessly goes from soft and breathy to almost belting.

Rendering

Her rendering of "I Need You" (Ty Lacy and Dennis Matkosky), the song popularized by country star LeAnn Rimes, comes as a bit of a surprise, especially when we learn that Fegi got first crack at it.

She sounds just as good as the country's singing princess—even better, perhaps, depending on what one finds more attractive. Fegi's is softer, huskier, but no less powerful, and soars higher. This cut is one of our favorites in this record.

Her duet with German music sensation Christian Wunderlich also makes for pleasant listening. By this time we realize that all of the tunes in this album are love songs—but though some of them are this close to being cheesy, Fegi's classy rendering saves the day most of the time.

Pop love songs are hardly known for being poetic, and the number with Wunderlich, "Two Hearts Can Beat as One," which the latter wrote himself, is no exception. Still, this song has a certain something—maybe it's the initial contrast between her voice and his (he sounds a little boy band-ish in the beginning). It doesn't say much, but it's catchy.

English version

"Even More," the English version of a popular Japanese song, "Koisuru Kisetsu," wouldn't have much going for it, if you took Fegi out of the equation. Our advice: just listen to the voice and not to the lyrics or melody. No matter how skillfully it was rendered and arranged, however, this song hardly stands out.

Among our favorites is the remake of Irene Cara's "Anyone Can See." One can hardly go wrong with familiar classics such as this, and Fegi's version is clearly sun —sweet, but not cloying.

One of the best tracks in this album is Fegi's take on the Tagalog classic "Di Ako Iiyak." (Sentiment of this sort sounds more real when sung in Filipino.) It's a lovely rendering —less strident than the original, and more pathetic. We don't like the *martir* attitude of this song (imagine calling yourself *putik*), but it's quite evocative, and she does a good job.

The only other Filipino song in this CD is "Babalik Ka Ba?" (Edith Gallardo), another *martir* paean which Fegi renders with utmost skill.

The last track, "Love Came To Me" (Shanice Wilson), is a stylish ending to what is, ultimately, a stylish album (despite the cheese). We're looking forward to more of Anna Fegi—and to more Filipino songs in her second album.

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Two performers' unions discuss plan to merge

LOS ANGELES—The entertainment industry's two major performers' unions would merge into one organization with separate affiliates for actors, broadcasters and recording artists under a proposal to be considered this weekend.

Joint board meeting

Directors of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (Aftra) are to hold a joint board meeting to vote on principles leading to the formation of a new union.

The proposal would require approval by 60 percent of members from both SAG and Aftra.

Supporters say consolidation would maximize the unions' strength at the bargaining table with media giants. They also say it would resolve jurisdictional conflicts, such as who represents actors in digital productions.

Aftra, with 70,000 members, represents TV and radio broadcasters and performers in daytime TV, game or reality shows. More than half its members also belong to SAG, which represents actors in film, commercials and prime-time TV shows. SAG, Hollywood's largest performers union, has 98,000 members.

Actors

"Today, actors, broadcasters and recording artists all work for the same few employers," Aftra national president John Connolly and SAG president Melissa Gilbert said in a joint statement Thursday. "With more than 40,000 members in common and with our interests and futures so clearly aligned, we need to act quickly and responsibly to maintain and enhance the leverage of our membership."

SAG members rejected a merger plan in 1999.

Under the latest proposal, each of the actor, broadcast and recording artist affiliates would elect a president. The groups would have autonomy over bargaining and other issues. The president of the new umbrella group would be selected by a convention of delegates.

Health and pension plans also would be combined. *AP*

GILBERT. President of the Screen Actors Guild.

SATURD al
E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

'How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days' wins at US box office

Matthew McConaughey (left) as Benjamin Barry and Kate Hudson as Andie Anderson in Donald Petrie's new hit. AP

LOS ANGELES—Screen heartthrob Matthew McConaughey's new film "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" turned out to be a lesson on how to win the weekend box office stakes in just three, figures showed Monday.

Final ticket receipts

Romantic comedy "How to Lose a Guy," also starring Kate Hudson, took the weekly crown with final ticket receipts of $23.8 million in North America last weekend, box office trackers Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. said.

> Petrie's romantic comedy made $23.8 M, followed by 'Shanghai Knights' with $19.6 M and 'Chicago' with $10.8 M

Another new release, Hong Kong star Jackie Chan's new action comedy "Shanghai Knights," opened in second place with a take of $19.6 million. The film co-stars Owen Wilson.

One of the hottest contenders for a nomination at Tuesday's Oscar nods announcement, "Chicago" was third in the line-up with $10.8 million in gross receipts.

The holder of last week's top spot, spy thriller "The Recruit," starring Irish actor Colin Farrell superstar Al Pacino, dropped down to fourth place this week with $9.5 million.

Premonitions

"Final Destination 2," a teen movie sequel featuring young women with eerie premonitions who battle to cheat death while being stalked by the Grim Reaper, was fifth with $8.4 million.

The comedy "Deliver Us From Eva," the story of a ladies' man paid by three pals to seduce their meddlesome sister-in-law, starring rapper LL Cool, took sixth place with $6.6 million.

Seventh spot was occupied last weekend by the slapstick comedy "Kangaroo Jack," which took $6.1 million, putting it ahead of "Biker Boyz," a modern day western on motorcycles which took $4.2 million.

Rounding off the weekly top 10 rankings were "Darkness Falls" in ninth position with a take of $3.8 million, and another Oscars hopeful "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" with $3.5 million. *AFP*

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'How to Lose a Guy . . .' is surprisingly tolerable

By Christy Lemire

NEW YORK—For a romantic comedy, "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" is surprisingly tolerable—and that's a ringing endorsement from a chick who loathes chick flicks.

Witty banter

The banter is witty much of the time, not just syrupy and forced. And the movie takes place in a New York City that's been waxed and buffed to such a high sheen, you can practically see yourself in its reflection.

(You know you're in Fantasyland because the lowly Knicks are playing the Sacramento Kings in the NBA finals.)

But the key is that the stars, Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey, have such an easy, undeniable chemistry.

They're great-looking and they look great together. They're perfectly coifed and stylishly dressed at all times. (Hudson's hair is so flawlessly, blindingly blond, it's practically a character itself.) Even when a truck rumbles by and splashes them with mud, they still manage to look cute. And that's pretty much all you need for a mindless, eye-candy date movie.

Columnist

Hudson plays Andie Anderson, a columnist for a Cosmopolitan-style women's magazine that takes on the tough issues, like "Sizzling sex in 10 days!" and "Do blondes have more fun?" But she's clearly in the wrong place, because she wants to write about politics and the environment, which fails to impress her hard-driving editor (Bebe Neuwirth, channeling Vogue's Anna Wintour).

In a cutesy alliterative touch, Andie hooks up with Ben Barry (McConaughey), a hotshot advertising exec who changes his shirt in the middle of the office so all the women can stare at his six-pack abs.

The premise is strictly old-school screwball comedy: After a female co-worker has driven yet another guy away by being too clingy, Andie gets an idea for her latest column: "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days." She'll pick someone out and make all the mistakes women make in relationships, hoping that he'll dump her.

MCCONAUGHEY AND HUDSON. Undeniable chemistry.

Meanwhile, Ben's colleagues bet him that he can't make a woman fall in love with him in—you guessed it—10 days. He'll pick someone out and stick with her no matter how hideously she behaves. The payoff has something to do with an ad campaign for diamonds, for which he's competing with two co-workers (Michael Michele and Shalom Harlow).

Martinis

Andie and Ben just happen to be in the same yuppie watering hole at the same time, and after a couple of martinis, voila.

The subtext is amusing at first, as Andie throws herself at Ben, and Ben, trying to be a gentleman, tells her he wants to take it slow.

But Andie quickly turns needy to the point of being psychotic, immediately moving into his apartment, cramming it with teddy bears and tampons, and throwing a tantrum in front of his buddies during poker night.

Even though it's a romantic comedy, director Donald Petrie needed to keep one foot in reality; he makes the mistake of letting Andie's behavior spiral too violently out of control to be believable.

But Petrie previously directed a then-unknown Julia Roberts in 1988's "Mystic Pizza" and Sandra Bullock in 2000's "Miss Congeniality," and he allows Hudson's innate charm to shine through. Although she's established herself as an actress in movies like "Almost Famous" and "Dr. T and the Woman"—and is no longer just Goldie Hawn's daughter—glimmers of her mother's charm are evident when Hudson is at her most zany and goofy.

As for McConaughey, that good-ol'-boy, twangy Texas thing he does ordinarily gets annoying, but it suits him perfectly in this role. And did we mention that he takes off his shirt?

Traps

"How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" falls into the usual romantic comedy traps toward the end—the unraveling of motivations and thawing of hearts. And we didn't need to hear the Gin Blossoms' "Follow You Down" ever again, much less as loudly as it plays during the movie's climax on the Manhattan Bridge.

But hey, it's Valentine week, and this can answer the question of "How to Choose A Date Movie in 10 Seconds." *AP*

Kevin Spacey to head new company of theater actors in London

By Ed Johnson

LONDON—Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey is taking a new role as artistic director of London's Old Vic Theater, the company announced Wednesday.

Two productions

Spacey, 43, who won Oscars for the movies "The Usual Suspects" (1995) and "American Beauty" (1999), will lead a new company of actors from 2004 and will appear in at least two productions each season, the Hollywood star told a crowded news conference at the historic theater.

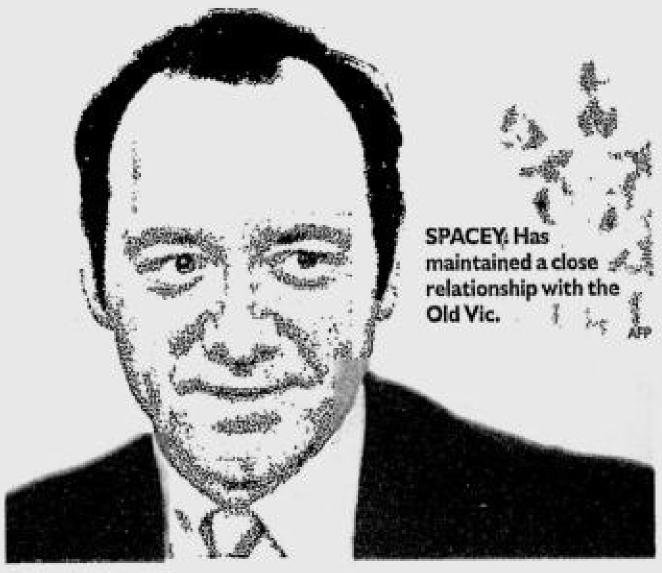
"I am thrilled the Old Vic's board of directors has given me their confidence to take on such a challenging role," said Spacey, who first visited the theater aged seven during a trip to London with his parents.

"I remember seeing Shakespeare and other productions on the Old Vic stage. To have grown up to act on the stage itself was a dream come true," he said. "To find myself in the role of director of the Old Vic Theater is beyond my wildest imaginings."

Trust

Sir Elton John, who is chairman of a trust which bought the 185-year-old theater in 1998, said he was delighted with Spacey's appointment.

"Kevin's talent is exceptional, but what has truly inspired me is his passion for, and commitment to, this theater. I know that under his leadership a permanent company at the theater will bring a totally new dynamic so that the Old Vic remains one of the most important theaters in the world," John told the conference, which was also attended by Dame Judi Dench, Richard Attenborough, "The Hours" director Stephen Daldry and the company's new producer, David Liddiment.


SPACEY. Has maintained a close relationship with the Old Vic. AFP

The first season of the new company will begin in the autumn of 2004. Spacey said he and Sally Greene, the theater's chief executive, would announce details of productions "in due course."

"We have a lot of ideas. We are going to do old plays, new plays, bring Shakespeare here on a regular basis. We hope to be innovative and to have some fun," Spacey told the news conference, looking slightly bemused at the mob of reporters and barrage of flash guns.

He said productions would tour to the United States, and "strengthen the cultural bridge" between Britain and America. Spacey did not say how long he would remain artistic director of the new company, but said he expected to go beyond the 2004-2005 season.

Close relationship

Spacey has maintained a close relationship with the Old Vic since he starred in Eugene O'Neill's "The Iceman Cometh" there in 1998. He is one of the theater's trustees and has played a role in raising funds to ensure its survival. The roof alone needs 350,000 pounds ($580,000) in repairs, Lord Attenborough, who is also a trustee, told the news conference.

Recently, Spacey was billed to sing some duets with Elton John at a fund-raising gala concert at the theater.

It will not be the first time Spacey has shown off his vocal talents. In November 2001, he performed The Beatles' "Hey Jude" at the Old Vic during a tribute to Sept. 11 victims.

Long known as "the actors' theater," the Old Vic has provided a stage for many of the greatest performers of the last century, including John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft, Alec Guiness, Peter O'Toole, Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. It is the former home of Laurence Olivier's National Theater company.

Public outcry

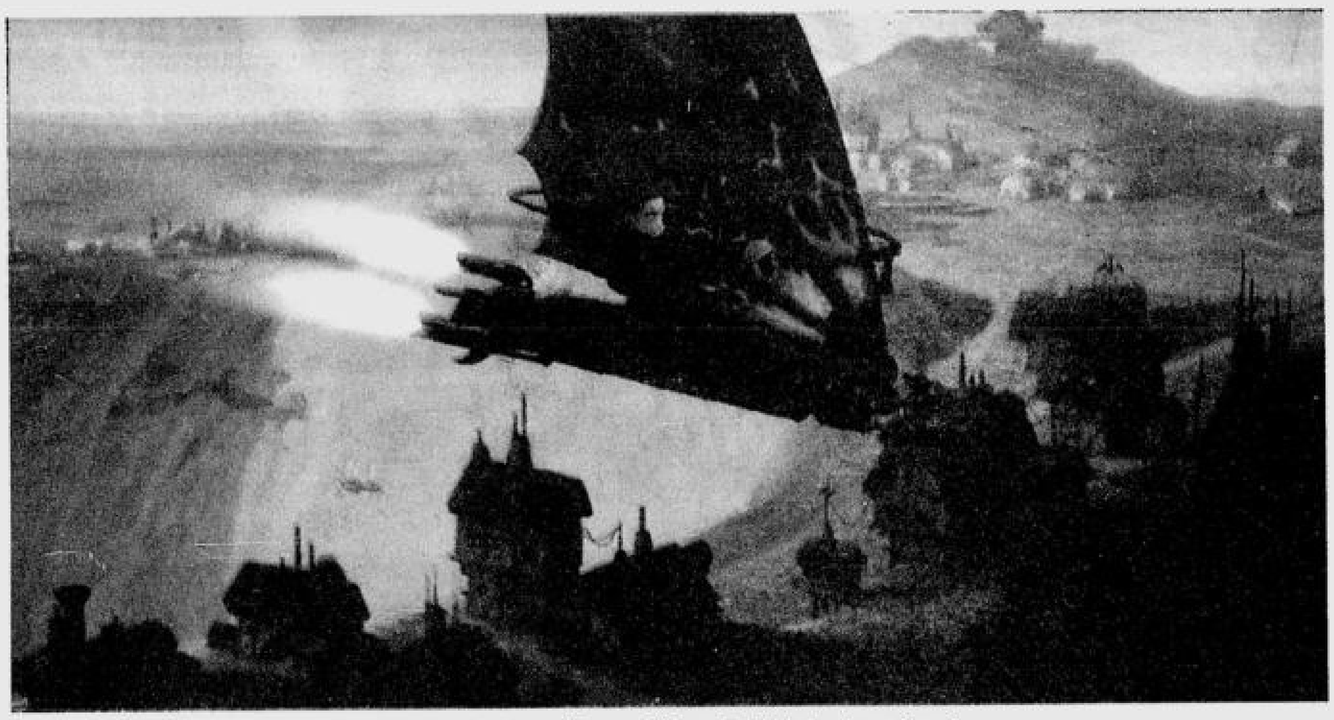
In 1998, Canadian owners Ed and David Mirvish decided to sell the building and the theater was in danger of closing. There was a public outcry when one bidder suggested changing it into a bingo hall.

The Old Vic Theater Trust bought the building for 3.5 million pounds ($5.8 million). The trust undertook to preserve and refurbish the building and boost the number of plays produced there.

The benefit concert also featured Sinead O'Connor, rising British star Ms Dynamite, Sharleen Spiteri from Scottish band Texas, Lulu, Canadian jazz star Diana Krall and her new partner, Elvis Costello.

Singer Courtney Love, who was cautioned by British police for verbally abusing cabin staff on a trans-Atlantic flight Tuesday, was also scheduled to take part.

Tickets cost between 250 pounds ($400) and 1,000 pounds ($1,600) *AP*


"TREASURE Planet" has been nominated for Best Animated Feature Film at the 75th Academy Awards. AFP

Oscar nomination may stem eclipse of 'Treasure Planet'

By Peter Henderson

LOS ANGELES—Sinking, sank, saved?

A surprise Oscar nomination for Walt Disney Co. box-office bomb "Treasure Planet" may have come too late to revive the animated feature's fortunes in movie theaters, though it may be just the ticket to boost video and DVD sales, industry watchers said on Wednesday.

Boost

Such a boost could ease Disney's financial pain from the movie, just as the nomination helps the studio's image.

Disney spent and lost a pirate's fortune to produce and market the outer-space adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. The high-profile flop was also a black eye for Disney's reputation as the originator of feature animation.

"It is a little bit of salve on the wound," of its reputation said Paul Dergarabedian, President of Exhibitor Relations, which tracks the box office take of movies.

As "Treasure Planet" limps to a box office finish, playing in just 312 theaters nationwide, it would take a brand-new advertising campaign to take advantage of the Oscar nomination, he and other industry watchers said.

Plans

Disney said executives were not available for comment on the company's plans for the film after spending a reported $40 million to market it on top of $140 million for production.

"Treasure Planet" was arguably the biggest surprise in the Oscar feature animation nominations for 2002, the second year for the category. Nominations for five of last year's 17 animated features were announced on Tuesday.

Now, the March 23 Academy Awards ceremony should help keep "Treasure Planet" on the minds of retailers just as they order the video, set for release on April 29, analysts said.

"This thing came and went so quickly, a lot of parents never even focused on it," said Tom Adams, president of DVD and video industry specialist Adams Media Research.

For retailers and parents, the nomination is a "seal of quality" that could boost video sales, he said.

"It is something on the order of maybe a 20 percent increase, but it certainly is not going to cause a 50 percent increase in what people are going to buy," he said. At $12.3 billion last year, total industry sales topped movie theater ticket sales by about 50 percent, Adams said.

Jeff Logsdon, an analyst who follows Disney at Gerard Klauer Mattison, said it would be premature to change forecasts, but said outright winning an Oscar typically had added 10 percent to 30 percent to films' ultimate results.

Meaningful

"On a film that may have lost $100 million, generating an incremental $10 million to 30 million is meaningful," he said.

Jonathan Dern, a partner in SD Entertainment and former head of MGM Animation, said he expected the studio would mount a new marketing campaign for the video release.

"The DVD campaign offers their marketing folks a second chance to play to the strengths of the movie," he said.

"It wouldn't surprise me if a few years from now they re-released the movie," he said.

Disney chief executive Michael Eisner in the 2002 annual report said marketing might have been to blame for the film's troubles.

"It's really a very good movie that never punched through in the crowded movie marketplace to get noticed. Either we mis-marketed it, or the idea wasn't appealing, or the stars were not aligned," he wrote.

Panned

"Treasure Planet" was panned by plenty of critics after taking years to finish, but the Academy Award nomination was a nod of approval from an elite group of animators.

But since "Treasure Planet" is at the end of its theater run, it would have to be essentially re-released if Disney wanted to promote its Oscar nomination for the big screen, said Dergarabedian.

Oscar nods tend to give a bounce to films in the middle of their runs, but in the case of "Treasure Planet", most families had already decided not to go. At the same time, it was not clear that children would be swayed by the Academy's endorsement, he said.

"I don't think the cachet is there with the target audience," Dergarabedian said. *Reuters*

Some 'wish' shows imitate telenovelas' emotional excess

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN they first started telecasting, the "wish" shows on local TV, Channel 2's "Willingly Yours" and Channel 7's "Wish Ko Lang," featured a variety of story types and treatment styles.

Preference

Of late, however, we have observed a decided preference for the tearful and the tragic, the better to get viewers all weepy and emotional—like our channels' currently popular telenovelas, both imported and homegrown.

That's the operative insight: judging from the "wish" shows' heartrendingly sad stories these days, these reality programs appear to be aspiring to the lachrymal level of the weekday and weeknight soaps that have been generating high ratings for some years now.

Thus, like the telenovelas, we now get "wish-fulfillment" stories about relatives estranged from each other, a loved one dying before a longed-for reunion can be effected, a grieving fiancé "marrying" her dead love, beneficiaries who die shortly after their wishes are granted, etc.

Copious tears

These and other six-handkerchief stories elicit copious tears not only from the beneficiaries and their relatives, but also from viewers susceptible to these stories' "emotional blackmail."

The logic for this shift must be the realization that the tearjerking telenovelas' popularity proves that Filipinos love to cry, so why not use this propensity to also boost the popularity of the "wish" shows on TV?

The trouble with this line of thinking is that it can result in the selection of stories, not just for the urgency of the cry for help, but also for more show biz-y considerations like their emotional potential, "human drama," etc.

This could then lead to excessive manipulation of the emotions of beneficiaries and viewers alike, and nobody likes to be manipulated in this way.

Basic motivation

We hope, therefore, that our "wish" shows leave the tearjerking to the telenovelas, where it more properly belongs, and go back to their basic motivation of helping as many needy people as possible.

Sure, ratings and entertainment value are realities that TV shows must take into consideration, but genuine need shouldn't be manipulated to the extent that the needy become mere pawns in the ratings game.

Where to draw the line? That's where each TV person's background, education, principles, sensitivity and common sense must hold sway above other, less genuinely helpful considerations.

It can sometimes be a tough call, but this is where we separate the really helpful and generous TV people from the show biz sort.

Tidbits, trivia from the 75th annual Oscar nominations

TRIVIA from this year's Oscar nominations:

John C. Reilly, nominated for supporting actor for "Chicago," actually co-stars in three best-picture nominees: "Chicago," "Gangs of New York" and "The Hours."

Complications

- Cinematographer Conrad L. Hall, who died Jan. 4 of complications of bladder cancer, was nominated for "Road to Perdition." He's the first posthumous nominee since 1995, when late producer Mario Cecchi Gori was nominated with Massimo Troisi for "Il Postino."
- John Williams' nomination for original score for "Catch Me If You Can" is his 42nd in music categories, making him the most nominated living person. Walt Disney holds the overall record with 64 nominations, and is the all-time winner with 26.
- Adrien Brody of "The Pianist" is the only nominee in the lead-actor category who has not already won an Oscar.
- For the first time since 1976, two non-English screenplays were nominated: "Talk to Her" (Spain) and "Y Tu Mama Tambien" (Mexico). (The last time, it was "Cousin, Cousine" (France) and "Seven Beauties" (Italy)).

Ineligible

- "Talk to Her," which also won a nomination for director Pedro Almodovar, was ineligible in the foreign-language category because Spain submitted another movie, "Mondays in the Sun." It did not receive a nomination.
- Donald Kaufman, one of two brothers nominated for adapted screenplay for "Adaptation," is the first fictional character to earn an Oscar nomination. Donald was created by screenwriter Charlie Kaufman for a movie about his efforts to concoct a screenplay.
- 2002's top-grossing movie, "Spider-Man," earned just two nominations: sound and visual effects.
- Richard Gere, who won a Golden Globe award for portraying sleazy lawyer Billy Flynn in "Chicago," didn't score an acting nomination Tuesday, although four of his co-stars did.

Nominated twice

- Julianne Moore was nominated twice: as lead actress for "Far From Heaven" and supporting actress for "The Hours." No one has ever won two performing awards in the same year. The last time anyone was nominated twice was in 1993, when both Holly Hunter and Emma Thompson were mentioned in lead and supporting categories. Hunter won lead actress for "The Piano," but her co-star from that film, Anna Paquin, claimed the supporting actress trophy.
- Best-actress competitors Nicole Kidman ("The Hours") and Renee Zellweger ("Chicago") are the only two repeating acting nominees from last year, when Kidman was up for "Moulin Rouge" and Zellweger for "Bridget Jones's Diary." Both lost to "Monster's Ball" star Halle Berry. *AP*

MOORE AND ZELLWEGER. Best Actress nominees for their performances in "Far From Heaven" and "Chicago," respectively.

CLOONEY. Lashes out at reviewer who found "Solaris" boring.

AP

Clooney snaps at movie critic

By Erik Kirschbaum

BERLIN—George Clooney reacted with a stream of invectives when a reviewer called the American actor's latest film—the box office flop "Solaris"—"boring" after it was screened at the Berlin Film Festival.

Questions

Clooney, who had even exposed his bare bottom for the camera in one scene in a bid to boost the film's commercial appeal, was happily answering questions at a news conference late last Saturday when a reporter rose to say the film was boring.

"I find you fascinating," Clooney said, responding to the Turkish journalist's remarks on the film—which got decidedly mixed reviews in the United States.

"You crack me up, man. You just wanted to get up and be a rat, you know that? You just wanted to get up and say something rotten. What a jerk! I mean honestly, you know, what a thing to say!" said Clooney.

"Solaris," directed by Oscar-winning Steven Soderbergh, is one of 22 films in the running for the "Golden Bear" prize at the Berlin film festival that opened on Thursday last week.

Revenues

It flopped at the US box office with revenues of just $15 million—the same as the amount Clooney is said to command for his appearances.

Based on a 1961 novel, "Solaris" is about a psychologist sent to a space station orbiting a planet covered in an energy-rich galactic ocean.

Chris Kelvin, the character played by Clooney, investigates a series of strange deaths on the space station, but is visited by a reincarnation of his long-dead wife that forces him to confront his past.

The novel raises the question whether or not the ocean is a giant brain that conducts psychoanalytical experiments on the space travelers sent to observe it.

The critical journalist said that much had been written about the film, "but I found it boring." "You make a lot of films, do you?" Clooney asked rhetorically. "You make a lot of films yourself? Yeah, I'd like to see you make a film first before you get to talk about it. What a jerk!"

Foreign markets

Clooney, 41, said he expected "Solaris" to do better in foreign markets. In 2000 the film "The Perfect Storm," in which he starred, had revenues of $182 million.

Soderbergh, asked by the same journalist if he were happy with his film, remained calm. "Yes I am. And thanks for the question," he said.

Even Stanislaw Lem, the Pole who wrote the best-selling novel "Solaris," complained recently about Soderbergh's film, lamenting that it focused on affairs of the heart rather than the head.

Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky made a slow-paced version of the film in 1972 which film enthusiasts regard as a classic. *Reuters*

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SATURDAY

Young, reckless, crazy? Not anymore, says Affleck

"Daredevil" star Ben Affleck with fiancee' Jennifer Lopez.

By Bob Tourtellotte

LOS ANGELES—Young, reckless, crazy? Not anymore, says Ben Affleck.

His has been a daredevil act in high-flying Hollywood ever since he and good buddy Matt Damon barnstormed the scene with the 1997 movie "Good Will Hunting," which earned them a shared Oscar for screenwriting.

Comic thriller

But on the crest of his new movie, comic thriller "Daredevil," sexy leading man Affleck said he is transitioning into a more humdrum life.

Affleck's days and nights of drinking and carousing that landed him in alcohol rehab last July are over, he said.

He turned 30 in August, proposed to fiancee Jennifer Lopez in the autumn, and now he is ready

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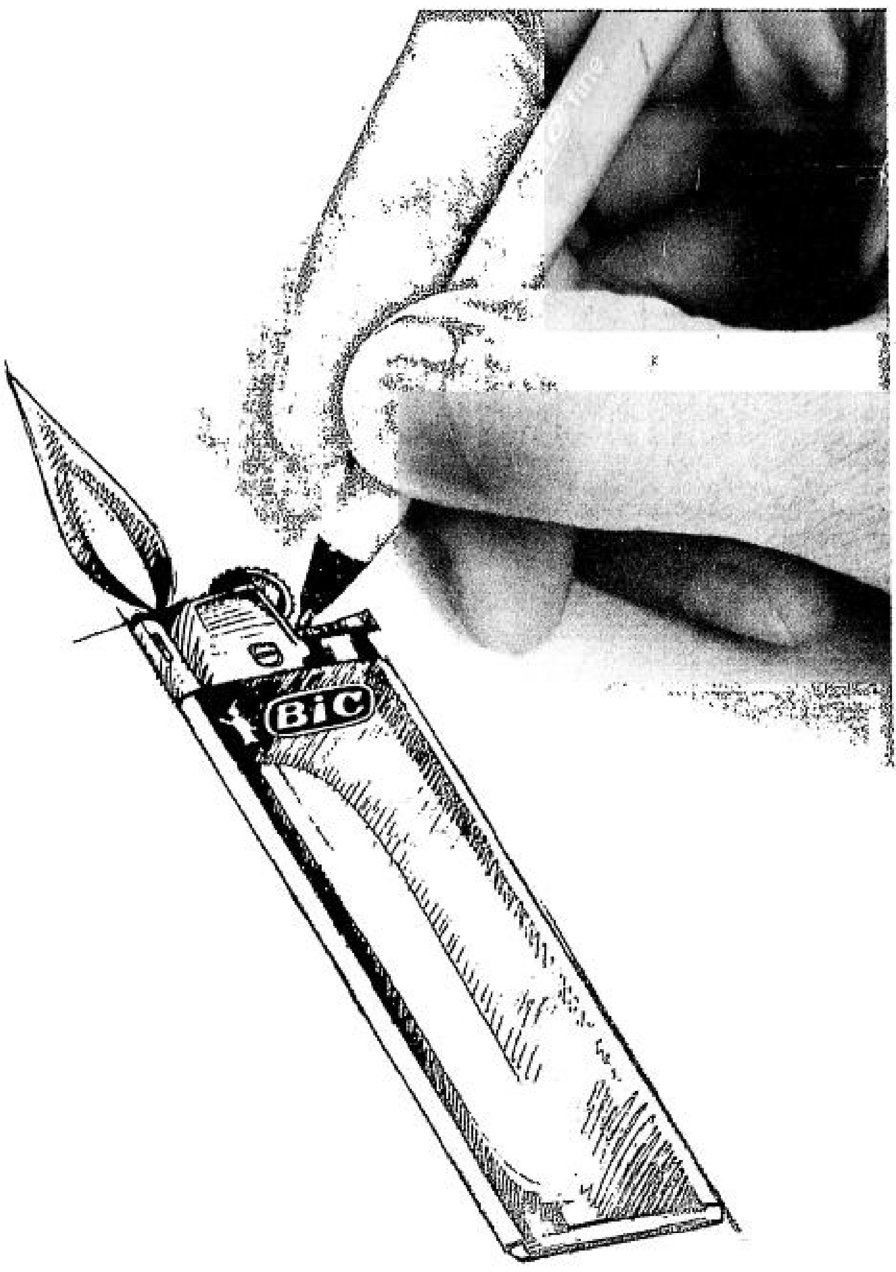

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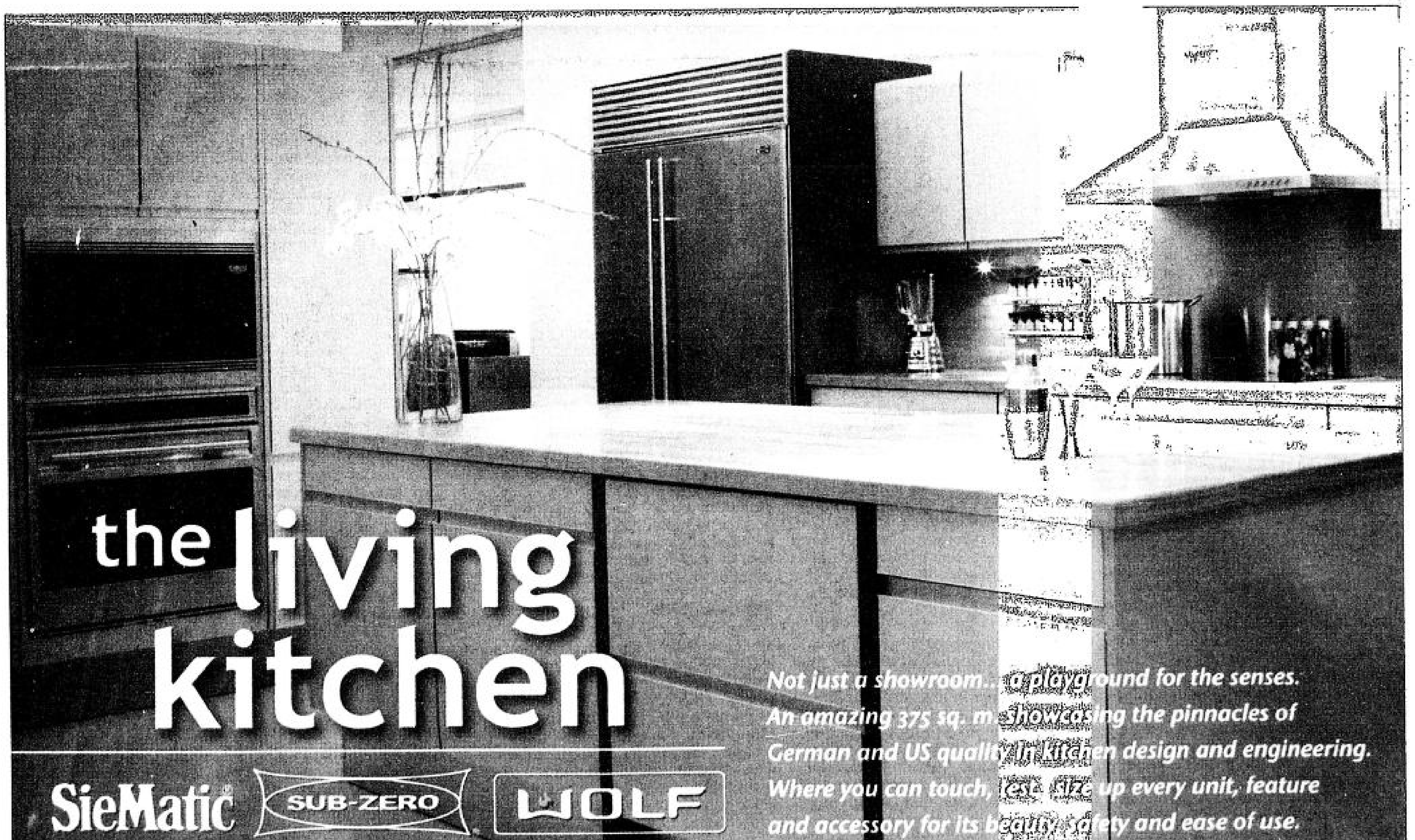

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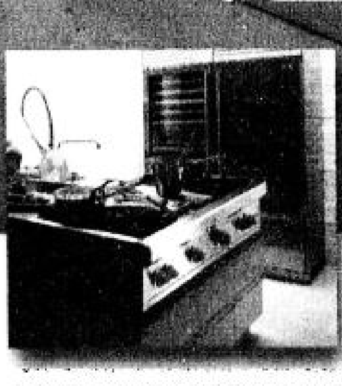

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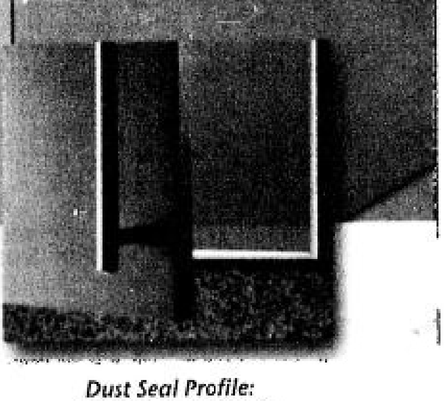

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Bibot Amador, theater pioneer, turns 70

By Behn Cervantes

IT WAS supposed to be a hush-hush affair. "Why," I asked, "Because Bibot is turning 70?" No, the conspiratorial girl replied. The affair was a big surprise for Ms Amador to the rest of the world—Zeneida *aka* Bibot Amador as in Repertory Philippines, as in Nenita to her family and pre-1967 friends.

Old friends

In 1967, Bibot along and alter ego Carmen Barredo *aka* Baby, Leo Martinez and a few other old friends decided to incorporate and establish professional theatre in Manila (note the word professional). Their lives were to change thereafter. Nenita would be established professionally as Zeneida Amador.

To everyone who worked with her in the scores of productions Repertory Philippines has staged since its founding in 1967, she is loved, sometimes feared, always respected.

All it took was for her to unequivocally commit her life to Theater and then rush in where angels feared to tread. Philippine Theater in English would never be the same again.

Bold move

To be sure, before Bibot and company took that bold move, an emerging theatre scene in Manila did exist. This was primarily due to the pioneering efforts of Jean Edades, Bert and Daisy Avellana, Severino Montano, Freddie Guerrero, Soc Rodrigo, Fidel Sicam, Nick Agudo, Fr. Reuter and many others who nurtured would-be thespians in different colleges.

The Avellanas had already invaded radio and introduced stage-trained actors like Vic Silayan and Vic Diaz to the movies. Montano and Guerrero had reached out to the provinces by establishing a grassroots theater following. However, all the hard work mostly was for "the love of it."

Bibot ventured to ask the all-important question: Could this love for theater be made to pay? Could it become a profession as Daisy, Naty Crame Rogers and many others hoped and prayed decades before?

Enter Bibot and company, fresh from advanced studies in the States. They not only hoped that their dreams would come true, they were also ready to work their butts off to make sure it would.

It would demand bold, stalwart and unswerving stewardship to initiate that daring step. Fortunately, Bibot possessed all those needed traits, and more. She had consistency, too, as Fr. Reuter in his testimony during her recent birthday bash stated.

Bibot had already impressed Manila theater aficionados with her portrayal of male (yes, m-a-l-e) roles in Reuter's plays and musicals. From the early '50s to the mid-'60s, mixing genders onstage was deemed inappropriate by some people.

King Arthur

She essayed the demanding father's role in "Tidings Brought to Mary" and played King Arthur in "Camelot" to Baby Barredo's Guinevere.

Bibot organized Repertory Philippines with kindred souls. It was certainly wobbly at the start. On the opening night of "Miss Julie," there were more people onstage than in the auditorium. Surely, perseverance was required and a lot of no-nonsense hard work, too.

AMADOR. Tears of joy trickled down her well-earned wrinkles.

Bibot was ready for the trials and tribulations. Anybody who worked with her soon learned in no uncertain terms that she was in no mood for nonsense. If you were committed, you were welcome. If you weren't, get out of the way! If you didn't imbibe that all-important work ethic, you were yelled at in English or Tagalog—or both, simultaneously!

You had to learn to work tirelessly, commit yourself to the vision without pause and/or restraint. You had to slave for the Muse of Theater.

Dedication

In time, the dedication paid off. Soon, there was indeed a developing professional theater scene in Manila. Wonder of wonders!

Last Feb. 6, Bibot turned 70. Rep colleagues felt it was time to celebrate...her life, vision, and efforts. Bibot claims she deserves every wrinkle on her face. The Rep gave her a birthday bash that day. In the meantime, chums Baby Barredo and Joy Virata secretly plotted to surprise her with a party on Feb. 9 at The Captain's Bar.

Friends of many years gathered to honor her. It was time to let her know how she was truly appreciated for her unstinting work to make Rep what it is.

Many who had worked with Rep in the late '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s came to greet her a rowdy happy birthday. A group was organized to render musical numbers meaningful to her, including selections from Rep productions.

A Pia Zadora joke came to mind: A witty emcee during a well-attended Hollywood affair said that, if a bomb should hit that hall, Zadora would be a star. Who was the local counterpart, I asked Anton Juan?

Mitch Valdez, Celeste Legaspi, Robert Seña, Cocoy Laurel, Noel Trinidad, Subas Herrero, Joy Virata, Maan Hontiveros, Chito Ponce Enrile, Butz Aquino, Joel Trinidad, Nieves Campa, Roy Alvarez, Celia Diaz Laurel, Malou Lauchengco, Carla Gutierrez and dozens of other theater personalities were all there, quietly waiting at The Captain's Bar for Bibot to arrive.

Hoodwinked

She was to be hoodwinked by Baby and Bibot's sister to believe they were going out for an intimate dinner. Her birthday had been officially celebrated, anyway, so how was she to suspect that this surprise was in the offing? In fact, Baby had encouraged Bibot to dress casually, right?

When she entered the hall, the surprise was sprung. Bibot was truly surprised! In good form, she managed a well-enunciated "P-ta!" when Happy Birthday was sung. She genuinely was surprised and touched by the overflowing affection.

Brother Amado Amador emceed the show. He related how, early on, Bibot relished directing him and anyone else who came under the spell of "make believe" in their Kamuning garage. Rep alumni and resident members greeted her through song and dance.

Others like Doy Laurel, Tony Espejo, Anton Juan, Nora Aunor, Cirio Santiago, Nini Quezon Avanceña and Jaime Zobel did it in an affectionate and insightful video documentary prepared by niece Pinky Amador.

Toddler

The guests smiled at pictures of Zeneida as a toddler. They laughed when they saw Nenita in her teens looking like any other girl, then burst into guffaws when pictures were flashed of Bibot in a party dress looking like Nenita . . . Vidal?

Naturally, there were snapshots of Bibot as we know her today—in shorts, a loose blouse (sans bra, confided Mitch) and the ubiquitous cigarette. I glanced at her. Cigarette in hand, Bibot was laughing at Nenita, too!

There were impersonators of Bibot, of course. A running rap number prepared by Joy Virata even enumerated her pointed comments and colorful cusses during rehearsals. *"Mas magaling pa ang driver ko!" "Mas malambot ka pa sa -t-ng gamit." " Walang silbi! " "Alis dyan! H-n-d-t!"*

Pros like Celeste, Cocoy and company rendered beautiful numbers and funny skits. The Repertory Philippines staff along with faithful make-up artists performed a fun song and dance number with one of them doing a hilarious take-off on Bibot.

Spirit

The staff captured her spirit, familiar as they were with the "soul" of Ms Amador, *aka* Bibot, erstwhile Nenita. They poked fun at her, but the affection they had for her was palpable and touching.

That night, love for Bibot did indeed overflow at The Captain's Bar. Flashbacks were many as memories were rekindled, scenes onstage and-off recast and performed again in our hearts.

As Joy said, Zeneida Amador really is a "teddy bear." She also has as, Baby claimed, a *"pusong mamon."* Bibot proved them both right that night. With her defenses voluntarily down, tears of joy slowly trickled down Bibot's well-earned wrinkles.

Yes, Bibot at her birthday bash tendered by Repertory Philippines friends and staff was truly surprised and genuinely happy—and deservedly so. Her many friends were also happy for her. May there be many more birthdays to come, Bibot!

Polanski's fugitive status clouds Oscar chances

By Steve Gorman

LOS ANGELES—Filmmaker Roman Polanski might be considered a frontrunner to claim the Academy Award as best director for his acclaimed Holocaust drama "The Pianist," except for one thing—he's a fugitive from justice.

The fact that Polanski fled to France in 1978 as he was about to be sentenced for having sex with a minor and faces arrest the moment he sets foot in the United States makes it highly unlikely that he will show up for the Academy Awards, even if he wins.

French citizen

The 69-year-old director, a French citizen who resides in Paris, would hardly be the first absentee Oscar winner. Marlon Brando, George C. Scott and Woody Allen have all snubbed the Academy Awards, but Polanski would be the first kept from collecting his statuette by the threat of incarceration.

"He has no plans to come to the United States," his Los Angeles-based agent, Jeff Berg, told Reuters on Tuesday. "He lives in Europe, his home is there, the legal issues are unresolved, and he has no plan for returning." Polanski himself made no mention of his legal quandary in a brief statement issued by the film's US distributor, Focus Features: "I am deeply honored by these nominations and regard them as a tribute to all those who made such fine contributions to 'The Pianist.'"

Best film

"The Pianist," which garnered a total of seven Oscar nominations and was voted best film at Cannes last spring, is based on the 1946 memoir of of pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Polish Jew who survived Nazi-occupied Warsaw. But Polanski drew heavily on his childhood Holocaust experiences, including his memory of his father telling him, "Walk, don't run," as he escaped a roundup of Jews sent to Auschwitz.

Polanski has earned a measure of sympathy in Hollywood for having lived through another personal tragedy—the murder of his pregnant wife, the 26-year-old actress Sharon Tate, by followers of Charles Manson in 1969.

The victim at the center of the 25-year-old statutory rape case against him, now a married mother of three living in Hawaii, also has said she forgives Polanski and believes his exile from Hollywood has been punishment enough.

POLANSKI is shown directing a scene in "The Pianist," for which he was nominated for Best Director.

AFP

Polanski originally was indicted on six counts, including rape, for having sex with a 13-year-old girl while she was under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The director insisted the sex was consensual but pleaded guilty to a single count of having sex with a minor, punishable by up to 20 years in prison. He fled to France shortly before sentencing.

Civil suit

A civil suit brought by the girl's family was eventually settled. And in 1997, a series of closed meetings between the director's lawyer, prosecutors and a judge sparked speculation that a deal was in the works to permit the filmmaker to return, but nothing ever happened.

One Oscar pundit, Tom O'Neil, said Polanski would be a clear favorite to win the Oscar were it not for his legal past, though he still has a "realistic" chance of an upset victory. O'Neil said Hollywood has a long history of forgiving the sex scandals of its stars on the Oscar stage, citing extramarital affairs by actresses Ingrid Bergman and Elizabeth Taylor as examples.

Taylor, widely seen as having broken up Eddie Fisher's marriage to Debbie Reynolds, went on to win an Oscar for "Butterfield 8." Bergman was named best actress for "Anastasia" several years after she sparked a public furor by having a child out of wedlock with Italian director Roberto Rossellini.

Previous nods

Polanski's nomination for "The Pianist" is his third as a director, with previous nods for the 1979 drama "Tess" and 1974's "Chinatown." He also received a screenplay nomination for "Rosemary's Baby." A spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Sandi Gibbons, said the status of Polanski's case remains unchanged. She said a retired lawyer who still represents Polanski contacts prosecutors about once a year, and did so in the last few months.

But because the director had already pleaded guilty and was waiting to be sentenced when he fled, "it's not within our power to ease the way for Mr. Polanski. He has to make arrangements with the court," Gibbons said.

Reuters

Promising finalists in UP video festival

By Leia Torre

RECENTLY, I found myself at the UP College of Fine Arts for the screening of finalists in the 2003 Inyorai (for In-Your_Eye) Bidyo (Video) Festival. The future has never looked this good.

Advisers

Inyorai is an annual student video festival organized by the UP Cinema as Art Movement (UP-CAM). The group's advisers include Cesar Hernando, who is a production designer of films like "Batang West Side" and "Bayaning Third World."

The festival was launched to promote independent cinema and encourage new filmmakers. Now an inter-university video competition, the festival has attracted student works from schools like Ateneo, La Salle, St. Paul, PLM, and of course, UP.

Categories

The video entries were classified into four categories, namely short feature, animation, experimental, and documentary, with one video to be chosen as best entry per category.

I think one of the best come-ons for this year's Inyorai is that the videos get to be screened on Cinema One's Alternative Cinema program. The cable channel had already featured last year's winners. This wider exposure is what filmmaking hopefuls need to be encouraged to create quality films.

Experimental

There were only two finalists in the documentary category, "Diyalogo" and "Ang Pagbabalik." The experimental entries were a mixed, fascinating lot. "Alitaptap" was a play of light and sound expressing the sensation of yawning. "Scythe" was about death, "Day 6: Salad," about the ironies of Pinoys and "Gaya-Gaya, Puto -Maya," about easily corrupted people.

The entries in the animation category were particularly impressive. "Sinag," a really funny and heartbreaking CGI-rendered short film, tells the story of a candlestick that refuses to get lighted and yet falls victim to its inevitable end. "Chalk Oscars" showed scenes from "Moulin Rouge," "Titanic" and "The Matrix" in chalkboard animation.

"Makina ng Manggagawa" is an insightful vision of workers raising hell and everything else to gain freedom from the oppressive monster they work for. "J.C. kicks Alien Ass" presents a skateboarding Jesus Christ who battles the occupant of a space ship that crash-lands behind his house! Very original— who'd have thought that J.C. was so good at boarding?

Director

Equally interesting were the finalists for short feature: "Lazarus" is a look into the lives of a rich and a poor man. "Director's Cut," shot in black and white, is an exploration on how a director visualizes and develops his story for a film. "Alin ang Naiba" is a really funny look at a homogenous culture and the loss of individual identity, at the expense of one's moral values. And then, there's "Sitcom," a hilarious film on the creation of an episode of "Wonder Boarders," playing up the clichés of Philippine situational comedy.

The films that did not make the cut are being featured in the out-of-competition program and will be screened during the festivities on Fine Arts Week on Feb. 10-15.

Call for new, more enlightened Filipino film producers

By Rica Arevalo

WE are urging new producers to enter the film industry—as soon as possible!

Formulaic

The big studios will always be there to make their formulaic Hollywood-like films, hoping to be the next big thing—a box-office contender.

The small-time production outfits will make low-budget, sleazy sex films so that they can continue to make more low-budget, sleazy sex films. They have found their place in the industry, so let us leave them alone.

What we need are producers who do not belong to the categories mentioned. We call on people or organizations that believe that our national cinema need not be limited to the tawdry and erotic.

Please invest your money in our talented film artists. Give us hope that inspiring and relevant films like "Munting Tinig" and "Magnifico" can be made again and again.

Both films were "rejects" of the government and film industry-run festivals in 2002. Directors Gil Portes and Maryo J. delos Reyes had to find their own financiers to make their "dream" projects.

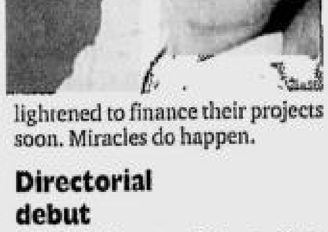
Subjective

The word "quality" is subjective. For the local film festivals, quality is written on paper only (see their rules and regulations). As seen in the last Metro Manila Film Festival, "quality" consists of great star value, box-office potential and, of course, Hollywood-like special effects.

The organizers say it is their most successful festival to date, because of the huge amount of money they earned, but what is the true measurement of success?

Up to now, we haven't seen a follow-up film by "Tuhog" director Jeffrey Jeturian or Cannes winner Raymond Red. I bet they are looking for potential producers and, in their mind's eye is a boldly-written caption: *Wanted, an understanding and supportive producer.*

These directors are among the ones who will shape our national cinema. They have a lot to give to the Filipino audience and I hope that new producers will be enlightened to finance their projects soon. Miracles do happen.



JIRO Manlo in "Magnifico."

Directorial debut

MTV director Robert Quebral is shooting his directorial debut with Viva Films. Award-winning TV commercial director Mark Meily will soon start filming his feature project for Unitel. We wish them lots of good luck and trouble-free production.

The opportunity to enter the film industry is there, but once you get in, it is how a person answers the producer's call that counts—to make money by hook or by crook, or to contribute to the growth of our national cinema.

CHAN. Has broken many bones in the course of his career as martial arts film star. AP

Chan admits his stunts are sometimes done by a double

HONG KONG—Renowned for performing his own daredevil stunts, and breaking many bones in the process, Hong Kong's action movie star Jackie Chan has started using body doubles—but only when he has to.

Crazy horse

"I will use stunt doubles if you ask me to ride an F-16 jet fighter, or to jump over a series of hurdles with a crazy horse, or to perform two 720-degree somersaults," Chan said in remarks that his manager e-mailed to The Associated Press.

"But one somersault, I'll do it myself," said the 48-year-old Chan. "I will do what I could do and I won't do anything that is out of my capability."

Chan was responding to a reporter's inquiry about a recent story in the South China Morning Post newspaper that said Chan used at least seven stunt doubles in his recent film, "The Tuxedo."

The Post quoted Chan as saying it wasn't his decision and the director and studio officials "call the shots."

Dramatic roles

The Hong Kong native made his mark in international film with his stunts and dance-like martial arts choreography, but he said recently he wants to move on to dramatic roles.

Chan said in 2001 he could only do his own martial arts stunts for another five years. *AP*

Young . . .

From page G1

to aspire to greater heights than being the celebrity actor whose life is fodder for gossip columns and tabloid headlines, he said.

Affleck already is producing movies and TV shows, wants to resume writing, and someday he could direct his own movies, becoming actor/writer/director/producer, he said.

Consequences

"You don't have the excuse of being young and reckless and crazy anymore," he told Reuters in an interview. "Things have more consequences . . . (time) kind of starts zipping by, and you want to make something out of it." He called his time at a Malibu, California, rehabilitation clinic a "line of demarcation" between the new Ben and the old, and he said his wild times have been exaggerated, possibly because the matter became public.

"I was just trying to change my lifestyle. Not so much drinking, as much as—well, drinking was part of it," he said. "(It was more) just going out every night and being in a haze a lot of the time . . . I didn't have any meltdowns, didn't have any episodes, didn't have any arrests.

"But I didn't want to end up there—and more importantly, I just wanted to be healthier," he said.

Affleck is quick to add that just because he isn't tossing back cocktails anymore, doesn't mean he has turned into some straight-laced do-gooder, either.

"It doesn't mean I use my time more valuably or efficiently," he added.

That is where the boyish Ben—the one with the big grin and tousled hair who favors jeans and T-shirts over suits and ties—comes up, and where "Daredevil" comes to the fore.

The Marvel comic book character is far less well-known than Spider-Man or Batman or Superman, but for Affleck, he is the only comic book hero the star said he would ever play. *Reuters*

Boob-tube . . .

From page G4

and directed by John G. Avildsen.

1977, "Annie Hall," starring Woody Allen and Diane Keaton, and directed by Woody Allen.

1978, "Deer Hunter," starring Robert De Niro and directed by Michael Cimino.

1979, "Kramer vs. Kramer," starring Dustin Hoffman and directed by Robert Benton.

1980, "Ordinary People," directed by Robert Redford.

1981, "Chariots of Fire," directed by Hugh Hudson.

1982, "Gandhi," starring Ben Kingsley and directed by Richard Attenborough.

1983, "Terms of Endearment," starring Shirley MacLaine and directed by James L. Brooks.

1984, "Amadeus," starring F. Murray Abraham and directed by Milos Forman.

1985, "Out of Africa," starring Meryl Streep and directed by Sydney Pollack.

(To be concluded)

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: Can you give us some tips for the Year of the Goat? Who will be lucky this year?

Guest: Included of the lucky animals this year are the dragon, horse and duck.

(Duck? Is there a duck in the Chinese horoscope?— Oh, you mean dog!)

* * *

Host: Who are the people who fall into particular animal signs?

Guest: Well, your president is a pig, and your mayor is a snake!

(Shhh! Not so loud!)

* * *

Host: What should we avoid this year?

Guest: No get into trouble with lack of understanding, OK? We all careful with commication skills!

(Look who's talking!)

* * *

Host: What about dragons?

Guest: Good enough, only careful when they contract a building.

(*Ay*, contract a building!)

* * *

Host: And the monkeys?

Guest: They have to keep close eyes on their money.

(*Ah*, please repeat?)

* * *

Host: Now, let's go to Chinatown. How did the New Year's Eve parade there go?

Field reporter: Well, thanks to the police, the parade was very order.

(*Ay*, very order!)

* * *

Host: What can you say about reports that a basketball player has become a drug addict?

Guest: Oh, that's bad and should not happen. *Ano na lang ang iisipin ng mga* playmates *niya?*

(*Ay*, playmates!)

* * *

Host: Many people are criticizing you these days. Why, do you think?

Guest: Because they misunderstand me. If only they did not, they would change. One thing only I can say, people who know me, they know me!

(Wow!)

Best picture awardees

A reader has asked us to list Oscar award-winning movies from 1970 onwards for him to add tapes of them to his video library. As requested:

1970, "Patton," starring George C. Scott and directed by Franklin J. Schaffner.

1971, "The French Connection," starring Gene Hackman and directed by William Friedkin.

1972, "The Godfather," starring Marlon Brando and directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

1973, "The Sting," starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, and directed by George Roy Hill.

1974, "The Godfather, Part 2," starring Robert DeNiro and directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

1975, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," starring Jack Nicholson and directed by Milos Forman.

1976, "Rocky," starring Sylvester Stallone

BOOB-TUBE/ G3

MARLON Brando starred in the 1972 Oscars' Best Picture winner, "The Godfather."

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SATURDAY Special

75th ACADEMY AWARDS
BEST ACTRESS NOMINEES

KIDMAN

HAYEK

MOORE

ZELLWEGER

LANE

Oscar nominations reflect banner year for women

LOS ANGELES—And the winner is—women!

Whoever takes home those coveted golden statuettes next month, it's been a memorable year at the movies for females, producing a bumper crop of performances from ladies with more on their minds than little men called Oscar.

75th ACADEMY AWARDS
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS NOMINEES

STREEP

MOORE

BATES

ZETA-JONES

LATIFAH

Dearth

In a town where glamour still reigns and actresses frequently lament the dearth of decent roles for those over 35, Hollywood on Tuesday nominated one of the strongest, most complex groups of female performers seen at the Oscars in years.

"These are not big hambone dramatic roles. These are really psychologically complicated parts that delve into the souls and hearts of these women. What's so terrific this year is that we've got so many of them," said Oscar pundit Tom O'Neil.

From Nicole Kidman and Julianne Moore in "The Hours," the intensely emotional drama about three diverse women, to the hijinks of Renee Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and Queen Latifah in the girl-power musical "Chicago," the best actress and best supporting actress Oscar nominations reflected the range and depth of Hollywood's leading women.

> In a town where glamour still reigns and actresses frequently lament the dearth of decent roles for those over 35, Hollywood has nominated one of the strongest, most complex groups of female performers seen at the Oscars in years

Style

"The Hours" and "Chicago"—also both nominated for best film—could hardly be more different in their style, tone and subject matter, yet they both break the Hollywood mold.

"Look at Renee Zellweger, in 'Chicago.' This is not any woman singing and dancing 'the hills are alive with the sound of music.' She is kicking up her heels trying to get away with murder. These are not your typical Hollywood heroines," O'Neil told Reuters.

Salma Hayek won a best actress nomination for her role as the very atypical, unconventional Mexican artist Frida Kahlo in "Frida." Hayek had lobbied for years to raise the money for the movie and prove that a former Mexican soap star like herself could make her way in Hollywood as an actress, producer and director.

"It's a wonderful year for the women, and also the movies themselves are so diverse," said Frank Pierson, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, as the Oscar nominations were announced.

Scott Rudin, producer of "The Hours," said film writers were finally recognizing the growing importance of the female audience, and as a result, better parts are being written for actresses.

Kathy Bates, nominated for best supporting actress for playing a sexually adventurous, middle-aged woman in "About Schmidt," said it had been a "banner year" for women.

Range

"It's great to see a range of actresses (nominated). You've got wonderful actresses out there, like Meryl (Streep) and you just want to see what she's going to do next," Bates said. "To us gals over 50, there is a range there, and I hope that continues to play out." What would the Oscars be without Streep, enjoying critical acclaim for "The Hours" and Oscar nominated for her best supporting role in the quirky comedy "Adaptation"?. The nomination, Streep's 13th, took the 53-year-old actress past legend Katharine Hepburn to become the most nominated performer in Oscar history.

Diane Lane, nominated for best actress for portraying an adulterous wife in "Unfaithful," said she has seen a wider range of parts coming to her.

"I think we can see the diversity, and that is always refreshing," she said, "and the fact that 'The Hours' was named best picture by the Hollywood foreign press (Golden Globes) is a wonderful vote for the strength of women's roles."

Julianne Moore was nominated both for best actress for her role in the 1950s domestic drama "Far From Heaven" and as best supporting actress for "The Hours."

But she doubted that the strong showing for women in 2002 would necessarily pay off in terms of better roles.

"It's nice to be nominated in a year when there is this much attention for women," Moore said.

"I don't know if it's a trend, but I do think it shows audiences are interested in more substantive films . . . it's great material, and the fact that there are ideas behind the movies, that is what is resonating with audiences." *Reuters*

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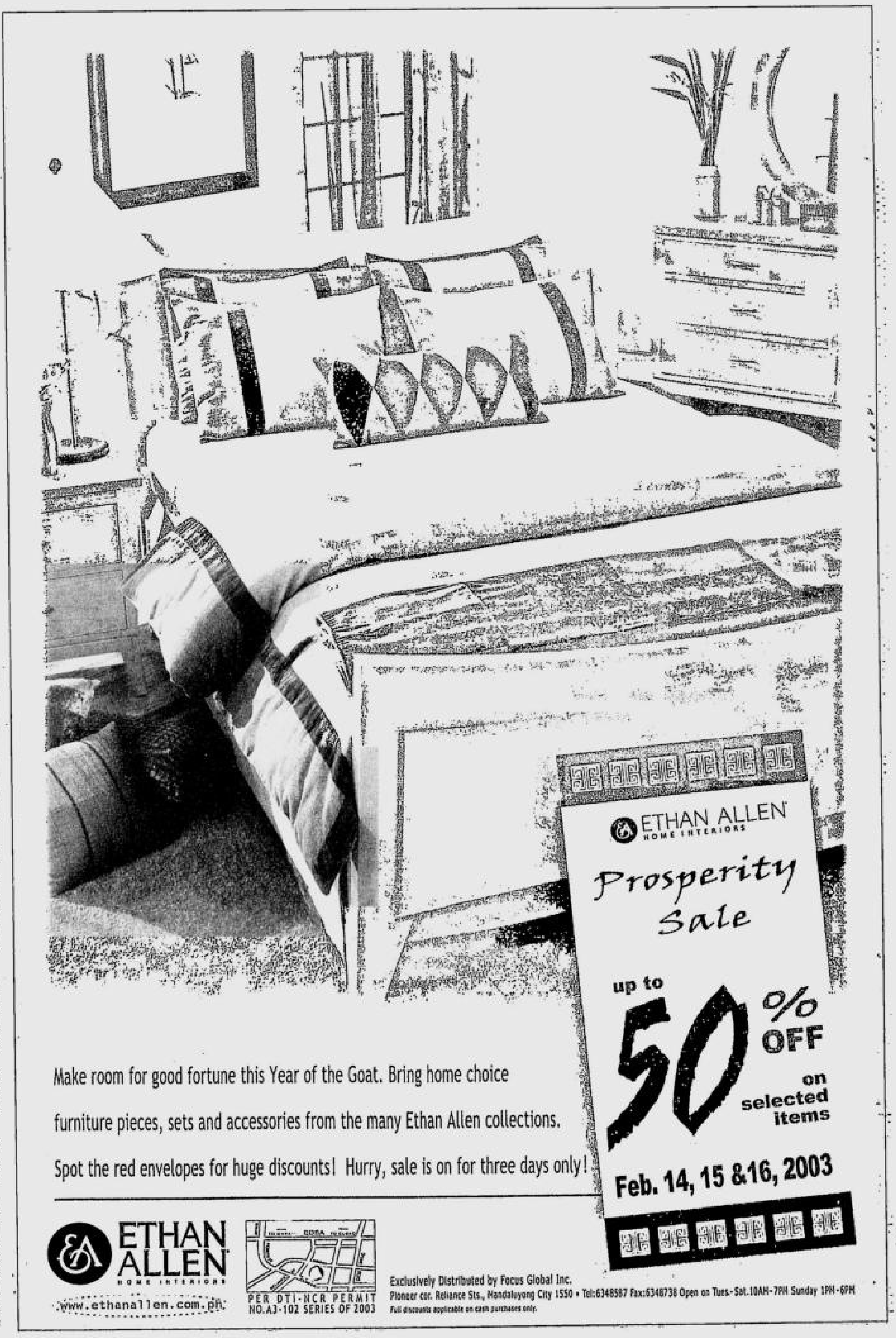
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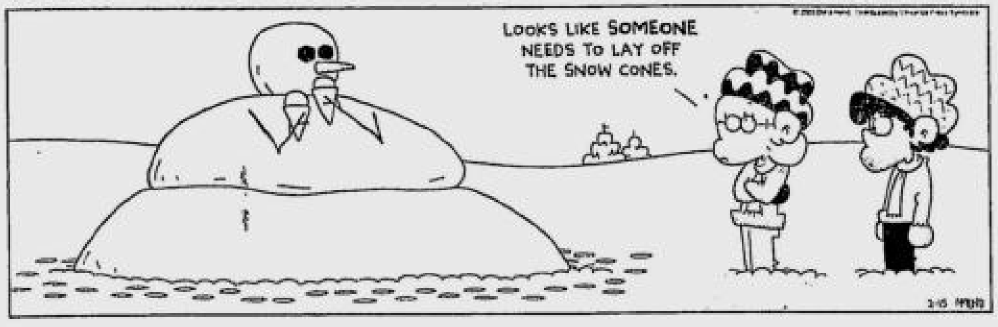
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2003

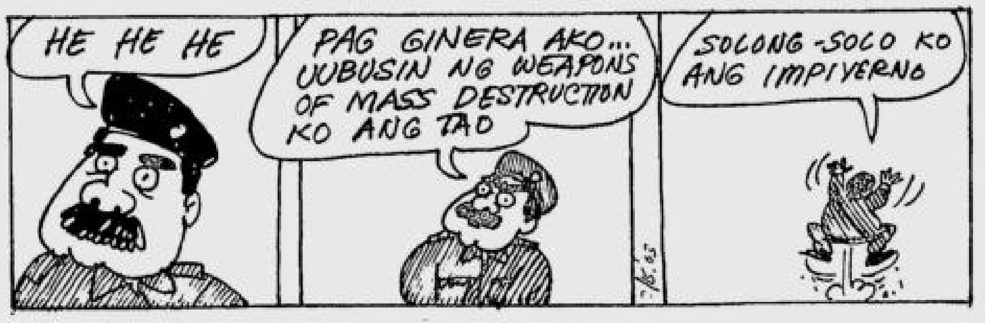
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE NEEDS TO LAY OFF THE SNOW CONES.
2-15

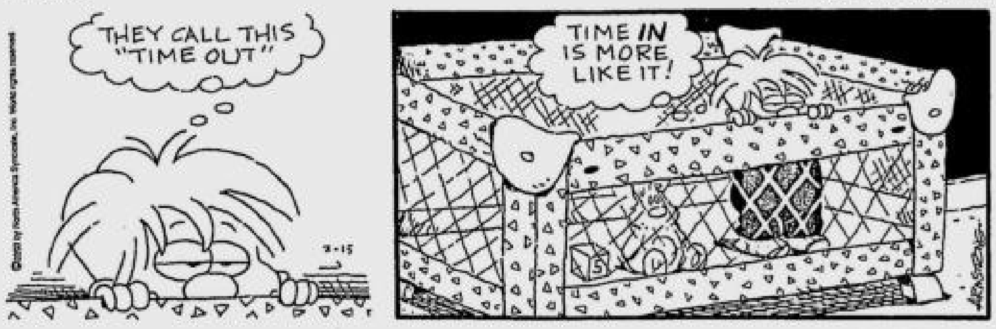
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HE HE HE
PAG GINERA AKO... UUBUSIN NG WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION KO ANG TAO
SOLONG-SOLO KO ANG IMPIYERNO

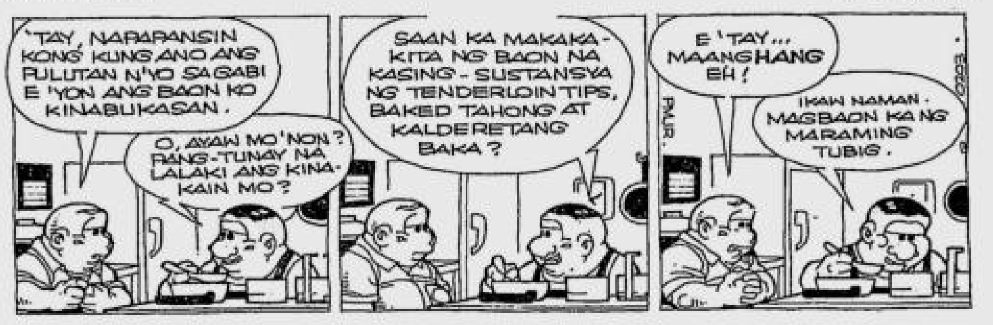
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THEY CALL THIS "TIME OUT"
TIME IN IS MORE LIKE IT!
2-15

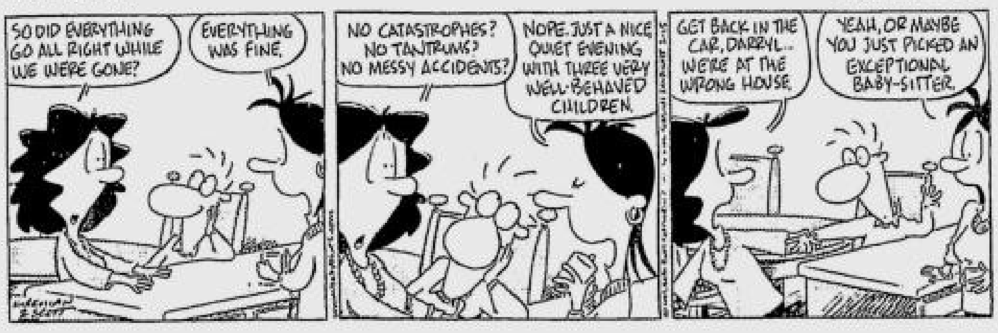
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'TAY, NAPAPANSIN KONG KUNG ANO ANG PULUTAN N'YO SAGABI E 'YON ANG BAON KO KINABUKASAN.
O, AYAW MO'NON? PANG-TUNAY NA LALAKI ANG KINA-KAIN MO?
SAAN KA MAKAKA-KITA NG BAON NA KASING-SUSTANSYA NG TENDERLOIN TIPS, BAKED TAHONG AT KALDERETANG BAKA?
E 'TAY... MAANGHANG EH!
IKAW NAMAN. MAGBAON KA NG MARAMING TUBIG.

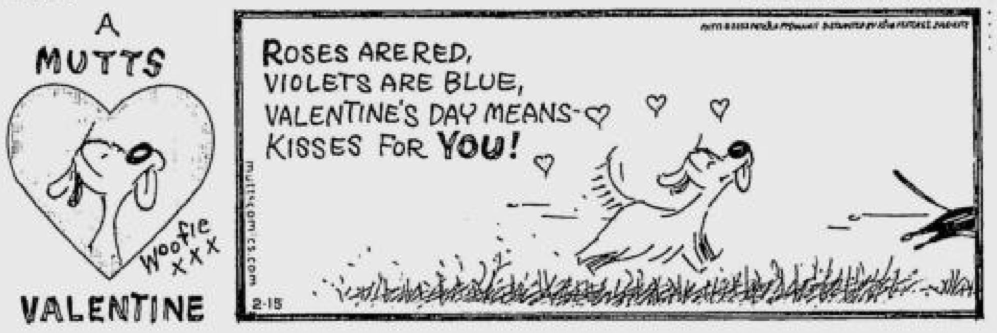
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SO DID EVERYTHING GO ALL RIGHT WHILE WE WERE GONE?
EVERYTHING WAS FINE.
NO CATASTROPHES? NO TANTRUMS? NO MESSY ACCIDENTS?
NOPE. JUST A NICE QUIET EVENING WITH THREE VERY WELL-BEHAVED CHILDREN.
GET BACK IN THE CAR, DARRYL... WE'RE AT THE WRONG HOUSE.
YEAH, OR MAYBE YOU JUST PICKED AN EXCEPTIONAL BABY-SITTER.

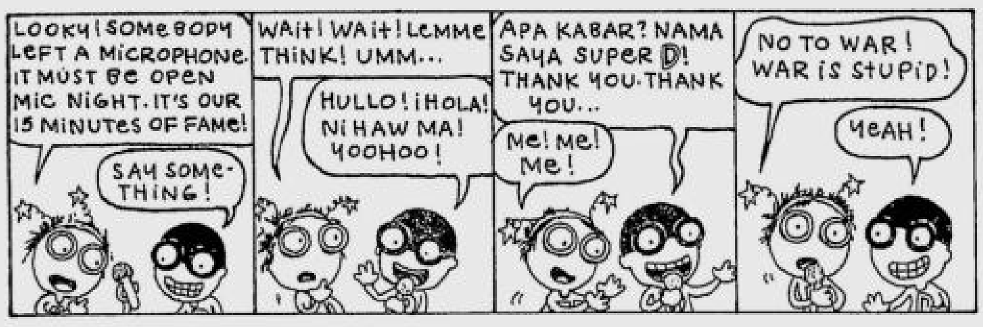
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A MUTTS VALENTINE
Woofie XXX
ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, VALENTINE'S DAY MEANS- KISSES FOR YOU!
muttscomics.com
2-15

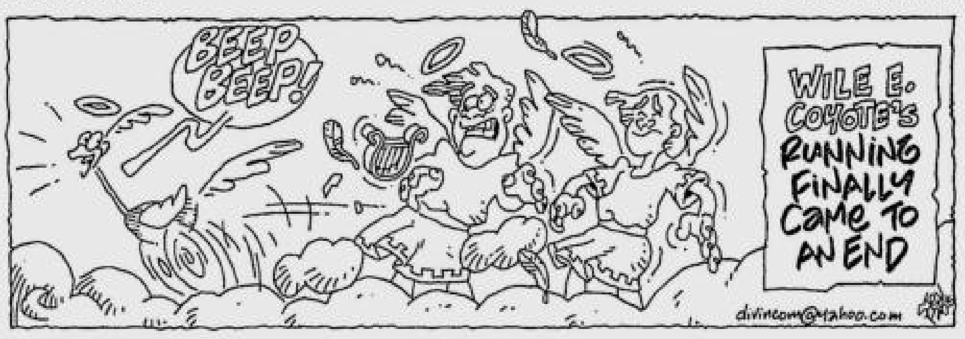
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


LOOKY! SOMEBODY LEFT A MICROPHONE. IT MUST BE OPEN MIC NIGHT. IT'S OUR 15 MINUTES OF FAME!
SAY SOME-THING!
WAIT! WAIT! LEMME THINK! UMM...
HULLO! ¡HOLA! NI HAW MA! YOOHOO!
APA KABAR? NAMA SAYA SUPER D! THANK YOU. THANK YOU...
ME! ME! ME!
NO TO WAR! WAR IS STUPID!
YEAH!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


BEEP BEEP!
WILE E. COYOTE'S RUNNING FINALLY CAME TO AN END
divincom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chris Farley, Marisa Berenson, Brandon Boyd, Renee O'Connor

Happy Birthday: Your strong will and sense of what's right will lead you to victory this year. You will win the support of your peers as you make great strides to do what will benefit those around you. Don't let laziness stand in your way. Rely on yourself to do what counts. Your numbers are 3, 15, 21, 36, 39, 45

ARIES (March 21-April 19): If you aren't careful, you will make a mistake. Sit down and decide where it is that you want to put your time and energy. Also, consider your motives.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Listen to the advice of elders in your family. The experience that others have had will save you from making a terrible mistake. Ask for help.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Get out of the house and be active today. This is a great day to begin a new project or begin a new routine.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will be unpredictable today, and it may cause confusion or difficulties when dealing with others. Something creative will allow a good outlet for your emotions and help subdue your moodiness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Give yourself plenty of time to accomplish what you need to do, and be patient in the process. Know that what doesn't get done today will get done at a later date.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can raise your visibility and gain popularity if you help others. Your straightforward, no-nonsense way of dealing with everything will attract attention and bring you acclaim.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't follow the crowd. If something doesn't appeal to you, don't do it. Don't gossip or take sides.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your involvement in open discussions will put you in the spotlight and raise your profile. It's time for you to share your wealth of knowledge.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't spend your money frivolously or gamble it away. It's time you started to save for your retirement or for an unexpected expense.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Give your partner a little space and do your own research to figure out what's going on. Use this time to do things for yourself that will help you become the best that you can be.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): If you aren't happy with your current direction, check out career options today. Research what's required to take the direction of your choice. Nothing is impossible.

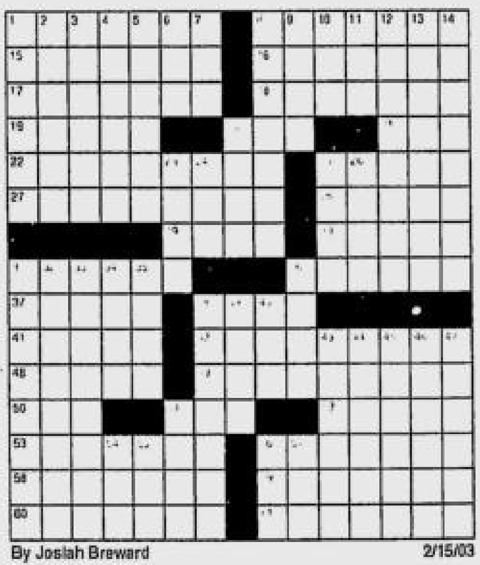
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Put your creative ability to good use with music, dancing or writing. You will get far more praise than you anticipate and will gain self-confidence.

Birthday Baby: You will be strong-willed your whole life. You will be independent and very sure of yourself, and you'll always take the initiative.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Author of "Eugene Onegin"
8 Elephant riders
15 Deeply felt
16 Land of Ghegs and Tosks
17 Sincere
18 Specially made
19 Rib-eye cousin
20 Sch. near Harvard
21 Cold War letters
22 Raises the pH
25 Singer K.T.
27 Reacts to a blow to one's head
28 Position
29 Type of foil
30 __ Domingo
31 Separation into factions
36 Home of the Wright brothers
37 Drink to
38 Call from the crib
41 Sufficient
42 "Women in Love" star
48 Stitch again
49 Barred from entry
50 White lie
51 Breakfasted
52 Camera-ready copy
53 Lacking serviceability
56 Increase in strength, as wind
58 Long steps
59 Blooper
60 Puff adder
61 Old Cordoba currency

DOWN
1 Post-crucifixion depictions
2 Not fit
3 Pitch or putt
4 Reddish brown dyes
5 Prepares to be knighted
6 NASA outpost
7 Profit figure
8 "The Dance" painter
9 Scads
10 SHO competition
11 Rower's need
12 Wavy
13 Makes a connection
14 "Dead Man Walking" star
20 Nothing more than
23 List particular
24 Use a microwave?
25 Peak in Thessaly
26 Stick around
31 Tide-pool dweller
32 Inherit
33 German royal family name
34 __ Royale National Park, MI
35 Slumgullion
36 Clammy
38 Valletta populace
39 Medicinal plant
40 Bub
43 Tete covers
44 "__ Fideles"
45 Astaire/Rogers classic
46 Exclamation of discovery
47 Rocks
51 Pub servings
54 Man with Dorothy?
55 Wedding vow
56 Beau Brummell
57 Paris street



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

2/15/03

Friday's Puzzle Solved

M	O	S	S	■	O	F	F	E	D	■	S	W	A	N
O	A	T	H	■	P	I	E	C	E	■	S	O	F	A
T	H	R	O	B	S	B	L	O	C	K	W	O	R	M
O	U	I	J	A	■	S	T	L	E	O	■	D	O	E
■	■	N	I	K	I	■	F	I	N	K	■	L	S	O
G	A	G	■	U	V	E	A	■	T	O	N	I	■	■
O	R	S	■	L	E	V	I	S	■	■	O	N	C	E
D	I	S	E	A	S	E	L	E	S	S	B	E	A	T
S	L	O	T	■	■	L	U	M	E	T	■	W	I	N
■	■	R	O	M	A	■	R	I	C	A	■	A	N	A
A	T	E	■	A	C	M	E	■	S	T	E	R	■	■
M	E	L	■	S	C	A	L	D	■	U	N	M	E	T
B	R	E	A	K	E	R	A	C	H	E	S	I	C	K
E	R	A	S	■	S	I	N	C	E	■	U	N	T	O
R	E	F	S	■	S	A	D	I	E	■	E	G	O	S

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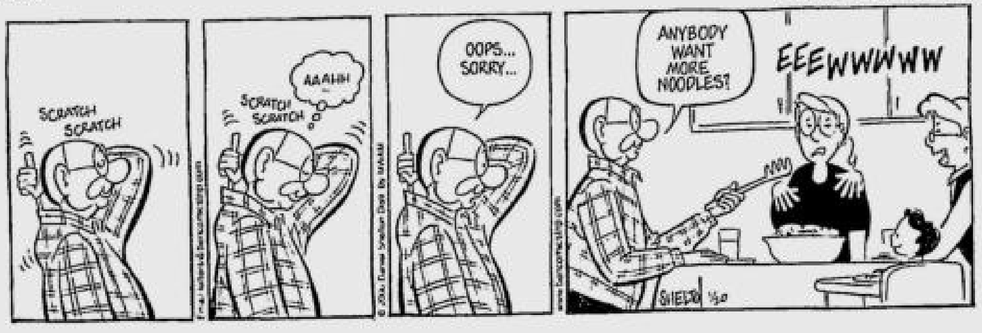
2/15/03

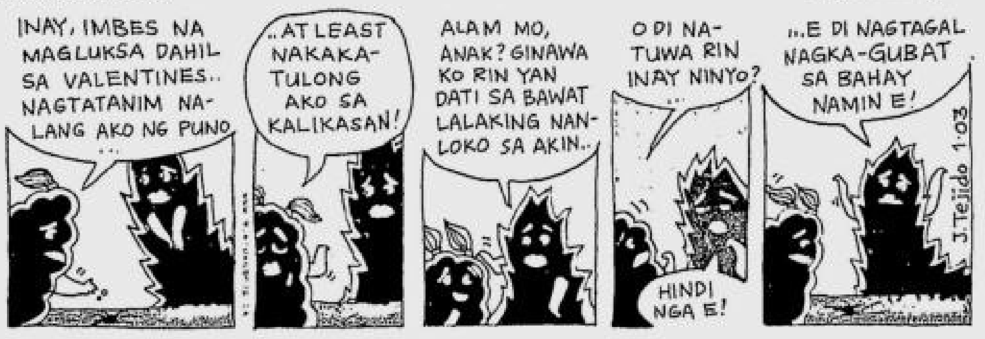
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SCRATCH SCRATCH
SCRATCH SCRATCH
AAAHH
OOPS... SORRY...
ANYBODY WANT MORE NOODLES?
EEEWWWWW

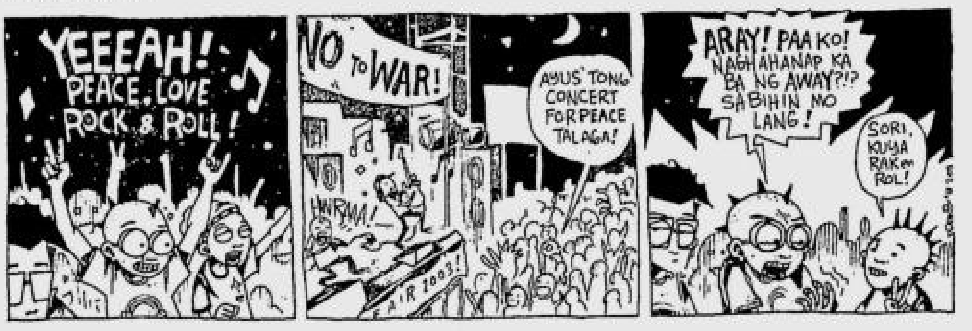
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, IMBES NA MAGLUKSA DAHIL SA VALENTINES.. NAGTATANIM NA-LANG AKO NG PUNO...
..AT LEAST NAKAKA-TULONG AKO SA KALIKASAN!
ALAM MO, ANAK? GINAWA KO RIN YAN DATI SA BAWAT LALAKING NAN-LOKO SA AKIN..
O DI NA-TUWA RIN INAY NINYO?
HINDI NGA E!
..E DI NAGTAGAL NAGKA-GUBAT SA BAHAY NAMIN E!
J.Tejido 1.03

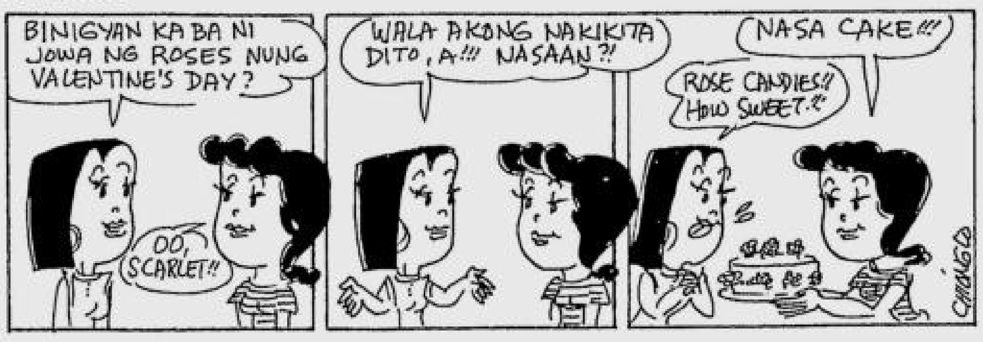
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


YEEEAH! PEACE, LOVE ROCK & ROLL!
NO TO WAR!
AYUS TONG CONCERT FOR PEACE TALAGA!
ARAY! PAA KO! NAGHAHANAP KA BA NG AWAY?!? SABIHIN MO LANG!
SORI, KUYA RAK en ROL!
AIR 2003

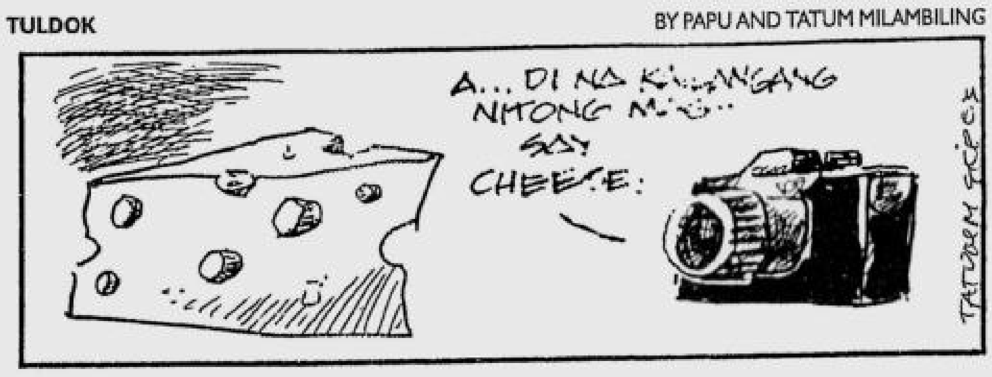
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BINIGYAN KA BA NI JOWA NG ROSES NUNG VALENTINE'S DAY?
OO, SCARLET!!
WALA AKONG NAKIKITA DITO, A!!! NASAAN?!
NASA CAKE!!!
ROSE CANDIES!! HOW SWEET!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


A... DI NA KINANGANG NITONG M...
SAY CHEESE:
TATUM

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY*Special*

Regine has been doing Valentine shows for nine straight years

By Jocelyn Valle

JUST like Yuletide, Valentine's week is a peak season for performing artists, including Regine Velasquez. The Songbird has been doing Valentine gigs for nine straight years.

Annual tradition

She had her first Hearts' Day performance in 1988's "Regine at 17," and returned to the stage two years later, this time with Janno Gibbs. In 1994, she did a show with Ariel Rivera titled "Two Hearts, One Beat." Since then, it's become an annual tradition for her.

"*Dati ayokong mag*-Valentine show *kasi nakakapagod,*" says Regine, whose new concert is titled "Songbird Sings Legrand." "*Ang dami kasing magkakasabay na* shows *kaya kailangang mag*-promote. *Kung may* boyfriend *ako, ia*-avoid *ko na mag*-Valentine show. *Nagkataon lang na may magagandang* opportunity, so *bakit ko palalampasin?*"

Preview

The musical event (Feb. 14, 15 and 16) at the PICC Plenary Hall is a preview of the planned CD recording of Regine and Michel Legrand, where she will interpret some of the popular composer's songs.

Regine still doesn't know where they'll record the album. "*Ang gusto niya sa* States, particularly in New York," she tells us, "*kasi nandoon daw 'yung mga magagaling na* musicians."

Album

Apparently, Michel immediately saw something special in Regine, so after she sang his compositions, "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?" and "No Matter What Happens," in his hotel suite last year, he agreed to do an album with her.

This thrills Regine no end, but she is more impressed with Michel's good nature. "He's so sweet!" she exclaims. "He always tells me, 'I'm so happy to see you!' *Tuwang-tuwa siya sa mga mata ko! At ang dami niyang kwento.*"

Modest

The projects with Michel are great accomplishments, but Regine remains modest about her achievements. "I don't think that I'm such a big hit," she maintains. "If I start thinking that way, then I'll just stop working. And I love my work."

"I also enjoy the fame," she admits. "But that's not the only thing that motivates me. The reason why I do this is because I love to sing and perform. My job also gives me a lot of opportunities to travel, to meet a lot of people and to work with legendary talents."—Like Michel Legrand!

VELASQUEZ. Michel Legrand saw something special in her.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKSHELF

Bette Davis is both gracious and bitchy in 'Mother Goddam'

By Noelani Torre

WE'VE seen only one Bette Davis film, but it was enough to convince us that she was, indeed, a great motion picture actress. That film, "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?," left us with goosebumps.

Stars

There are stars, and there are stars. Bette Davis was of the sort who never go out of style. Her name, like those of a few other stars (think Katharine Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe), remains alive to today's audiences, even though she passed away more than 10 years ago.

Curious about this actress, who was dubbed a "wide-eyed Sarah Bernhardt" by Time magazine, we were glad when we came across one of the books written about her life and her career. "Mother Goddam" (Berkeley), a biography written by Whitney Stine, with a running commentary by the actress herself, is as spicy as the famed Davis personality.

Career

The book focuses largely on her career, with a little information concerning her personal life. It was a career that didn't have an auspicious start. After training at John Murray Anderson's Dramatic School, Davis made her debut as an actress on Broadway, shifting to film at age 22, but she didn't impress many people.

She was an enigma —neither the charmer nor the glamorous beauty that Hollywood was stocked with in those days, and people soon labeled her with the unglamorous title "little brown wren." Years later, while being interviewed on the "Dick Cavett Show," she humorously recalled a testing incident:

"They didn't know what to do with something that looked like me. At that age, I want to tell you, in 1930, I was the Yankee-est, most modest virgin who ever walked the earth! They laid me on a couch, and I tested 15 men."

Her first six films were all flops, and the studio finally decided to drop her. "The phone rang as Ruthie [Davis' mother] was in the midst of packing," writes Whitney. "Davis answered, and a professional matter-of-fact male voice said, 'This is George Arliss. Would it be possible for you to come to Warner Bros. immediately for an interview with me for my next film, 'The Man Who Played God'?"

Spiced with her own salty comments—the fabulous life and career of
Bette Davis
Mother Goddam
Whitney Stine with Bette Davis
Pages and pages of photos! "Finally, there's one moviestar biography worth talking about!"

DAVIS' career bio is as spicy as the actress herself.

Insightful comment

Davis agreed to do the film, and the rest, as they say, is history. But not quite. Here, Davis inserts an insightful comment on the changes in Hollywood:

"In many ways there are not enough changes—too technical a discussion to go into here. As to kinds of films, an enormous difference. Theater and, of course, films reflect the times we live in, and the tastes of the public often reflect the world of the present.

"There is, however, one fatal change. Gone are the gamblers: Zukor, Goldwyn, Mayer, Warner, Cohn, Thalberg, Zanuck, and countless others. They gave us our careers —sometimes they won, sometimes they lost millions in promotion of a script and a star. People of my era—the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s—owe these men our careers. They were our fathers. This is the big change in the Hollywood of yesterday and today."

Davis makes a lot of comments like this throughout the book, acknowledging the support her colleagues gave her and praising favored co-actors, but she also makes a lot of the salty remarks she is more famous for.

When Whitney quotes Errol Flynn's description of her—"She thought she was the greatest actress who ever lived"—Davis interrupts with: "As to this quote from Errol: It is as untrue as all his other comments in his book about working with me. He had no respect for me as an actress because I was a worker at my profession and he wasn't."

Nominations

Davis' didn't have a smooth relationship with Warner Bros. —she felt that they weren't giving her good scripts (and they truly weren't). Nevertheless, she won most of the 10 Academy Award nominations she would eventually get while affiliated with this studio.

Mr. Stine's narrative is interesting enough, though it sometimes gets bogged down by too much detail. But it is Davis' comments that carry the day. At turns gracious and bitchy, but always refreshingly candid and dramatic, it is her forthright voice that engages the reader and keeps us reading to the very end.

Bette Davis was always outspoken—she quarreled with her directors, producers, co-actors, critics, even family and friends. Thus it is only fitting that this biography be like her, as well—blunt and chock-full of the fascinating details of a long, unforgettable career in an industry notorious for its short memory span.

'Greek Wedding,' 'Chicago,' 'Columbine' among Writers Guild's film nominees

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—The surprise blockbuster "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," the splashy musical "Chicago" and the documentary "Bowling for Columbine" were among screenplay nominees Thursday by the Writers Guild of America.

Low-budget

Nia Vardalos—writer and star of the low-budget "Greek Wedding," which has grossed $240 million—earned a nomination for a Writers Guild Award for best original screenplay.

Other nominees for original screenplay were: Antwone Fisher for his self-titled, autobiographical drama about coming to terms with childhood abuse; Michael Moore for "Bowling for Columbine," an examination of gun violence in America; Todd Haynes for the 1950s melodrama "Far From Heaven," which he also directed; and Jay Cocks, Steven Zaillian and Kenneth Lonergan for "Gangs of New York," Martin Scorsese's 1860s epic.

Adapted screenplay

Nominated for adapted screenplay were:

—Peter Hedges, Chris Weitz and Paul Weitz for "About a Boy," based on Nick Hornby's novel about a womanizer hitting on single moms. The Weitz brothers also directed.

Widower

—Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor for "About Schmidt," a comic drama about a widower taking stock of his life, adapted from Louis Begley's novel. Payne directed.

—Charlie Kaufman and his fictional twin brother Donald, who shares screen credit for the fractured Hollywood tale "Adaptation," a whimsical take on Susan Orlean's book "The Orchid Thief."

—Bill Condon for "Chicago," adapted from Bob Fosse's stage musical about two jailed murderesses competing for headlines.

—David Hare for "The Hours," from Michael Cunningham's novel about author Virginia Woolf and two women in other eras with connections to her novel "Mrs. Dalloway."

Winners will be announced March 8.

Television contenders

Among television contenders, episodes of "Sex and the City" took three of the seven nominations for comedy. The other series earning comedy nominations were "The Bernie Mac Show," "Scrubs," "Frasier" and "Ed."

Episodes of six dramas earned TV nominations: "The West Wing," "Six Feet Under," "Resurrection Boulevard," "ER," "The Education of Max Bickford" and "The Sopranos." *AP*

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM FEB 15 - FEB 21

CH	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:30 Bida si Mister, Bida si Misis 9:30 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 7:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Business and Leisure	7:00 Sailormoon Sailor Stars 7:30 Family Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Saturday Night Specials 11:30 Star Trek Voyager	6:00 Dragon Ball Z 6:30 Imbestigador 7:30 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:30 Kakabakaba 9:30 Blockbuster Cinema *Pusong Mamon* 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Master Showman	6:00 Real TV 6:30 Entertainment Tonite 7:00 Largo 8:00 7 Days 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Valentine's Day*	7:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 8:00 Star For A Night 9:00 Viva Box Office 11:00 Kagat ng Dilim	6:00 Travel Time 6:30 The Beast Machines 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 7th Heaven 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deal	7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras Ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	5:30 CBS Evening News 6:00 E! News Weekend 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Martin Scorsese* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story *Whitney and Bobby* 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Waikiki*
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Home Along Da Riles 9:30 Sunday Family Cinemas 11:30 Dong Puno Nightly 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 11:00 Unlimited Driving	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price Is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 K! 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Match TV 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Mercury Rising* 11:00 Sunday Report	6:00 PBA Games 8:00 Sinemaks 9:30 Viva's Hot Hits 11:00 El Shaddai	6:00 Invasion America 6:30 Digital Tour 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Yes Dear 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The West Wing 10:30 Scariest Places on Earth 11:30 News Central	7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night movies	6:30 Live From the Red Carpet *2003 Golden Globe Awards* 8:30 The 2003 Golden Globe *Post-Show* 11:00 Movies on E! *Two for the Road*
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Game K N B? 7:00 Bituin 7:30 Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay 8:00 Sa Puso ko, Iingatan Ka 8:30 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:00 Alias 10:30 Night Visions 11:00 Headlines	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 PBL	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Bugs 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Two	6:00 Frontpage 6:40 Habang Kapiling Ka 7:20 Ang Ibigin Ay Ikaw 8:00 Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:40 Kung Mawawala Ka 9:20 Magpakailanman 10:30 Saksi 11:00 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Wyred 6:30 Hot Ticket 7:00 Simpsons 8:00 Jag 9:00 24 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City	6:00 PBA Games 9:00 The Weakest Link 10:00 IBC News 11:00 Ronda Trese	6:00 The Three Stooges 6:30 Voltron:3rd Dimension 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Buffy 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan	6:00 E! News Live 7:00 Behind The Scenes *Runaway Bride* 7:30 Mysteries & Scandals 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! News Live 10:00 Best of Late Show 11:00 Wild On *Thailand*
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	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Game K N B? 7:00 Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay 7:30 Bituin 8:00 Sa Puso ko, Iingatan Ka 8:30 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:00 Whattamen 9:30 Klasmeyts 10:30 Headlines	6:00 14th Asian Games (Replay) 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 MMDA on The Road 11:00 Magbuhay Professional 11:30 Concert at the Park	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Pygmalio 7:00 Time Quest 7:30 Kool on Kam 8:30 Friends 9:00 That's 70's Show 9:30 Planet X 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Task Force Siyasat	6:00 Frontpage 6:40 Habang Kapiling Ka 7:20 Ang Ibigin Ay Ikaw 8:00 Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:40 Kung Mawawala Ka 9:20 Ben Bola Nga 10:30 Saksi 11:00 Jessica Soho Reports	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Wyred 6:30 Entertainment Tonite 7:00 Sabrina 8:00 Roswell 9:00 Fugitive 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Real TV 11:00 Wrestling	6:00 PBA Games 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:00 IBC News 10:30 Viva's Hot Hits 11:00 IBC News 11:30 People First	6:00 The Three Stooges 6:30 Voltron:3rd Dimension 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Samurai X 8:00 Dark Angel 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Twilight Zone	6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:30 Q Showcase	6:00 E! News Live 7:00 Behind the Scenes *Notting Hill* 7:30 Mysteries & Scandals 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! News Live 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Hong Kong*
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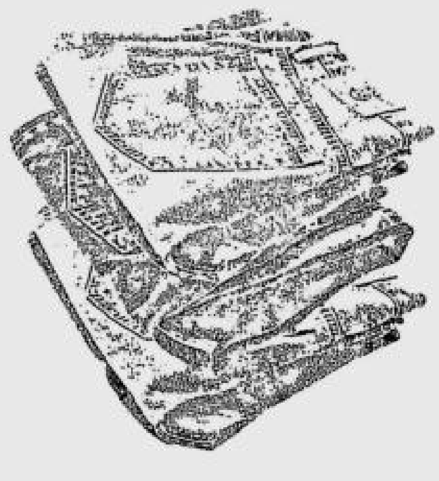

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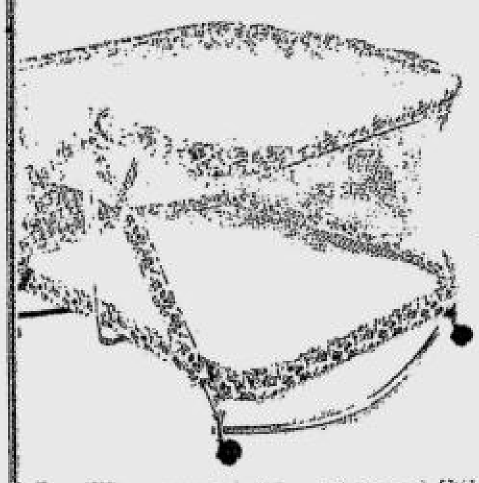

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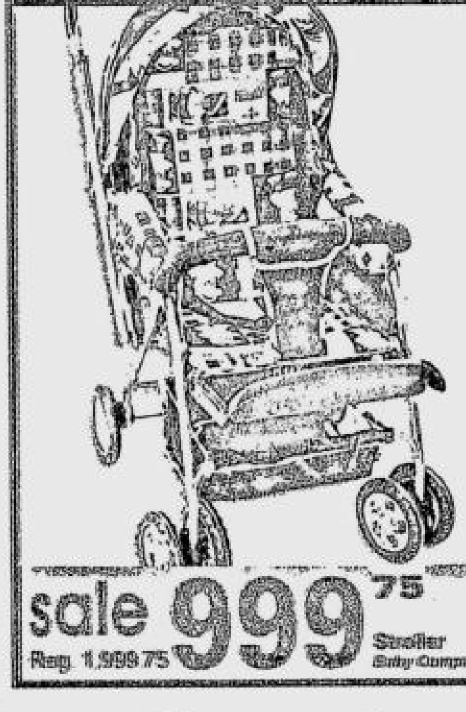

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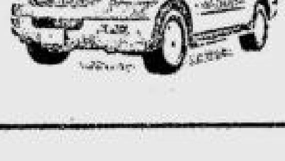

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Jan. 15 - April 6, 2003

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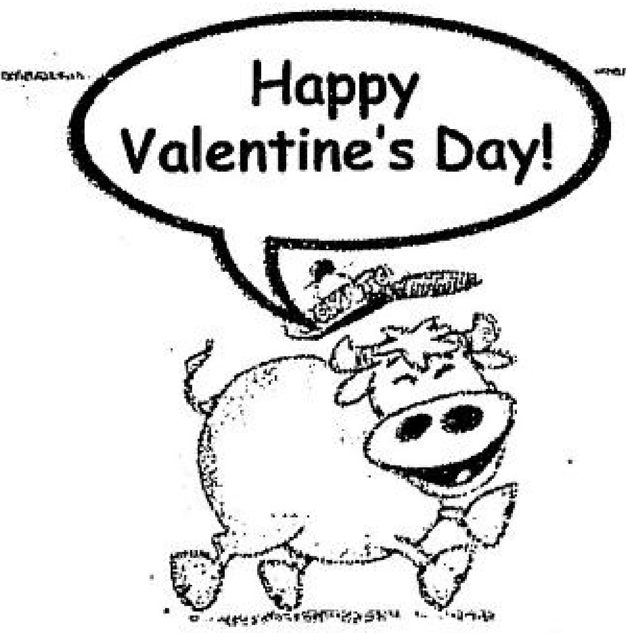

Happy Valentine's Day!

E-mail: pr_junior_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Junior INQUIRER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2003 ✦ 8 PAGES ✦ VOLUME 7, NUMBER 20

HTTP://YOU.INQ7.NET/JI

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Scented Stamps Page 2
No to War Page 4
Story: The Lucky Marble Page 5
Shirley's Pets Page 7

BUSY in SCHOOL

METRO Manila grade school campuses have been bustling with contests and activities the past few weeks. Our writer Eline Santos went on assignment as JI snoop and filed these reports.

Sticky tikoy and stringy pancit in Xavier School

A PROGRAM was held for Chinese New Year where the seventh-graders executed a graceful ribbon dance, together with the third- graders on their hand-held drums.

This was followed by a traditional lion and dragon dance, and a demonstration of the martial art Wushu.

"I liked the dragon dance and martial arts demonstration because it's very entertaining," comments Jeremy Ibasco, 13.

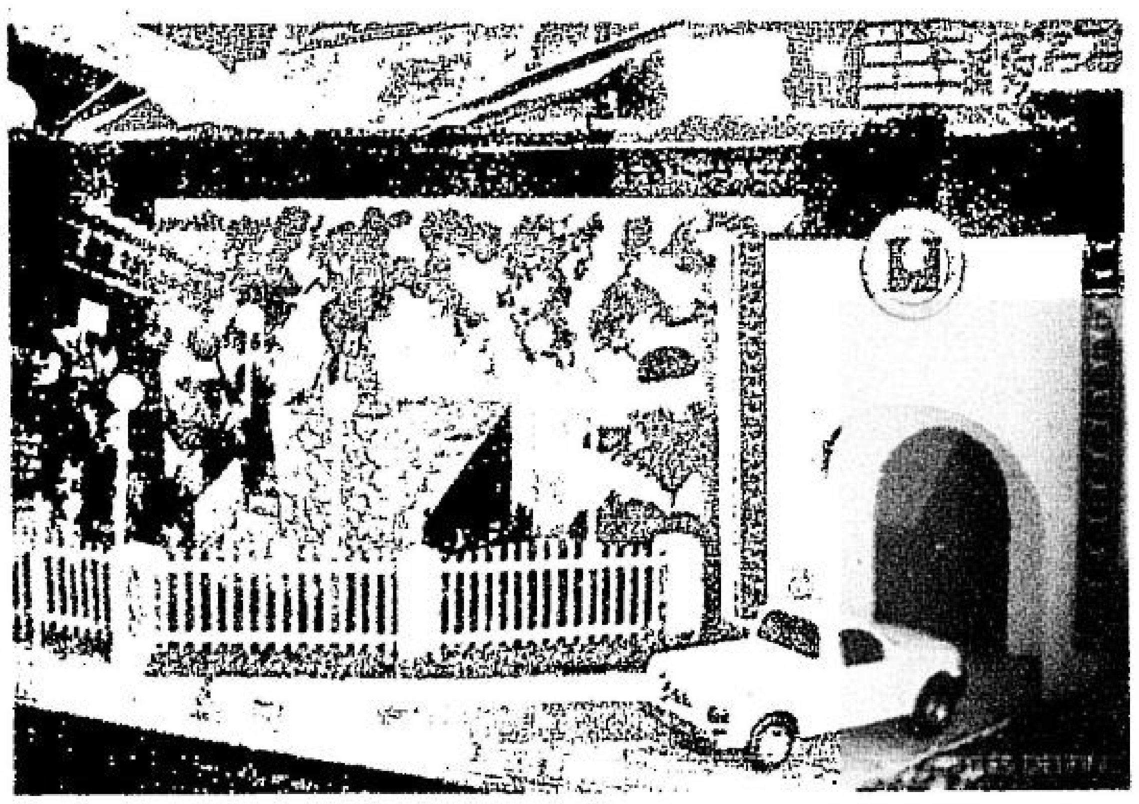
Another part of the entertainment was film showings of popular movies in Chinese. Ever watched Harry Potter dubbed in Chinese? That's what the fifth-graders did.

Contests and games were also held. Grade 7 students had a spelling contest in Chinese.

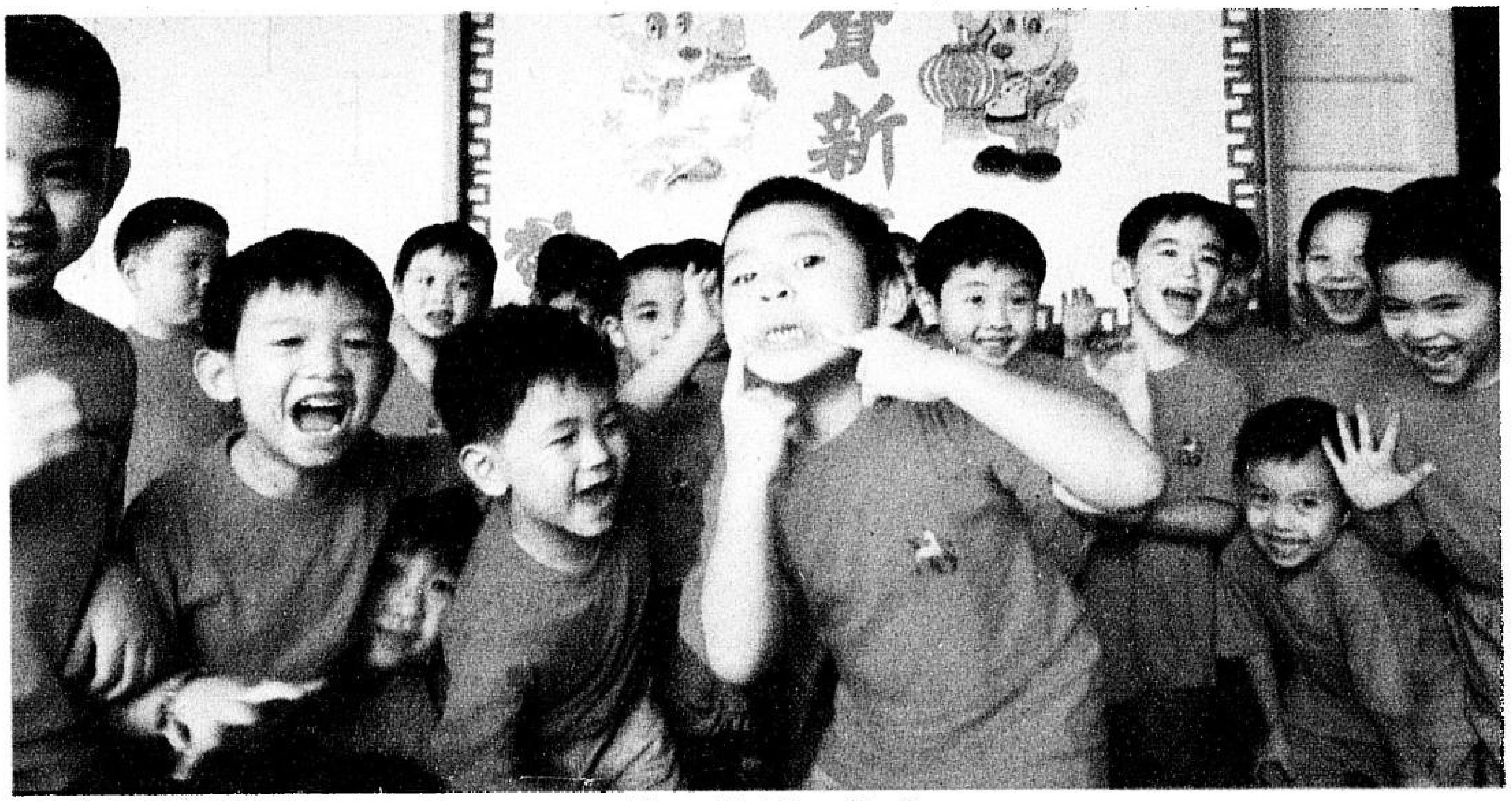
And of course, there was tikoy, pansit and other yummy food.

There are reasons why certain foods are served during the Spring Festival.

Busy/ p. 8



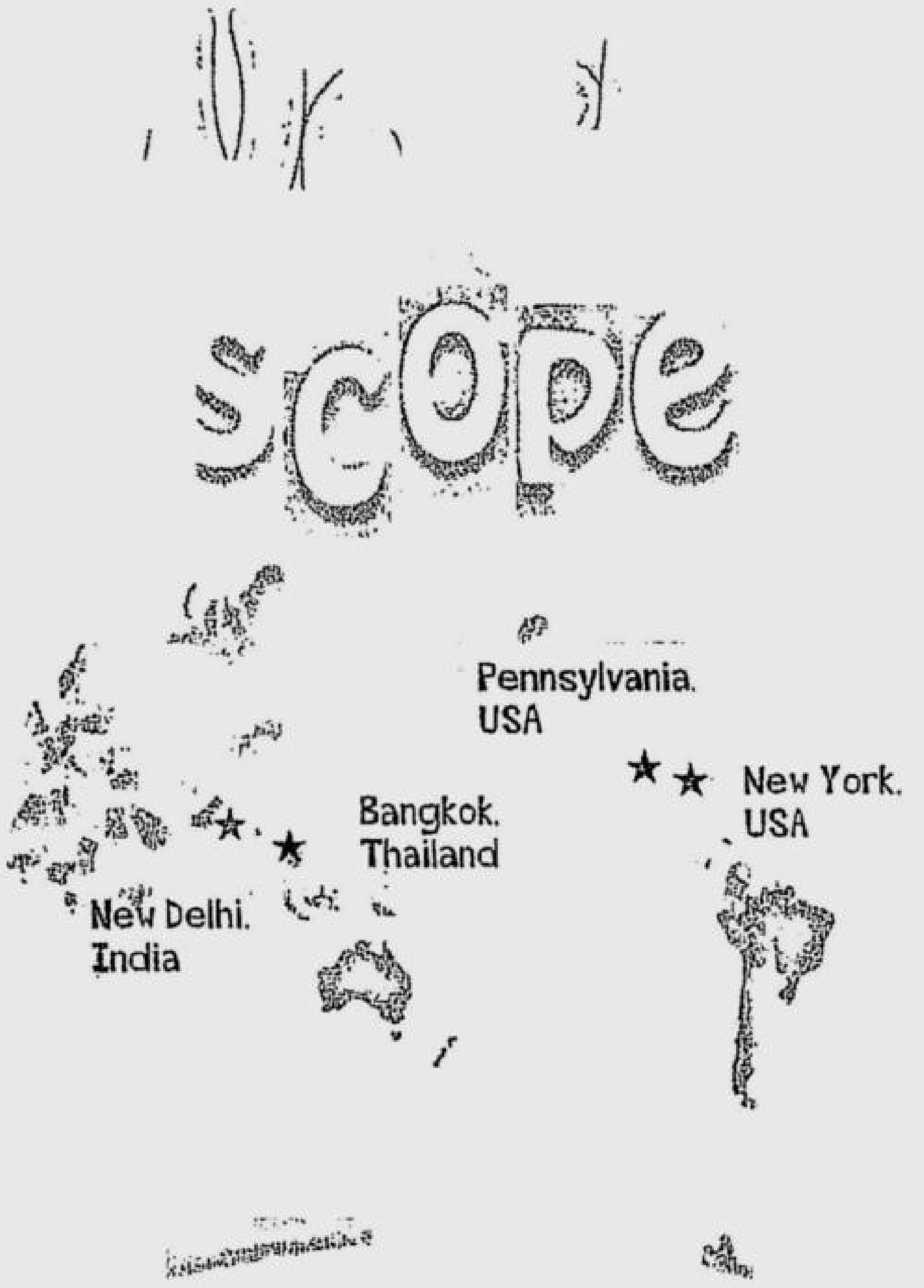
CAN you tell it's only a miniature of Abra? There's a mini-Philippines in Seton. See story on Page 8.



XAVIER students from Nursery-A shout Kung Hei Fat Choi! EDWIN BACASMAS

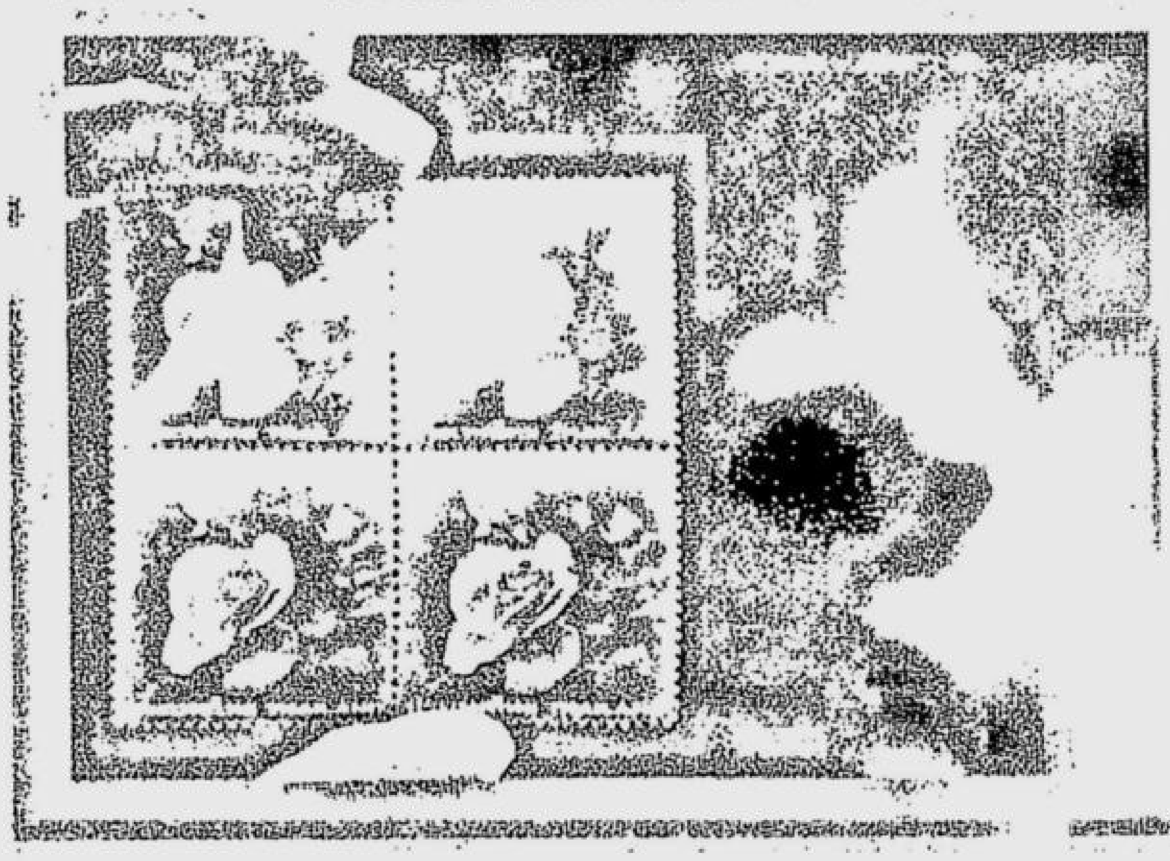
THIRD-graders twist their hand-held drums. EDWIN BACASMAS

SCOPE



Groundhog Day

GROUNDHOG Punxsutawney Phil is held up by handler Bill Deeley at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The chubby rodent, Phil, saw his shadow during the annual Groundhog Day ceremony on Sunday, signaling six more weeks of winter in North America. The ceremony, which dates back to 1887, stems from an ancient European superstition that winter will last another six weeks if a burrowing animal like a groundhog or a hedgehog sees its shadow on Candlemas Day, which falls on Feb. 2. No shadow means an early spring. *Reuters*



Fragrant Postage Stamps

A THAI stamp vendor displays the "Valentine aroma stamp" at a post office in Bangkok. The Valentine aroma stamps feature the unusual Blue Nile rose, a lavender-colored, sweet fragrance blossom. One stamp depicts the roses in the shape of a heart while another shows a bear holding a rose bouquet. Some four million stamps are being printed in the two designs and will be available in Thailand starting today. *AFP*

INDIA TODAY
The Global Indian
DOING US PROUD

Man vs Computer, again

CHESS grandmaster Garry Kasparov studies the board against the chess super-computer Deep Junior, during the fourth game of the Man vs. Machine chess championship in New York. In 1997, Kasparov lost to the computer named Deep Blue. *Reuters*

India Grieves for a Daughter

INDIAN-born astronaut Kalpana Chawla is featured on the cover of the Jan. 13 issue of the national Indian magazine India Today. Space shuttle Columbia broke apart in flames as it streaked over Texas towards its landing strip Saturday, Feb. 1, killing all seven astronauts including Chawla. *AP*

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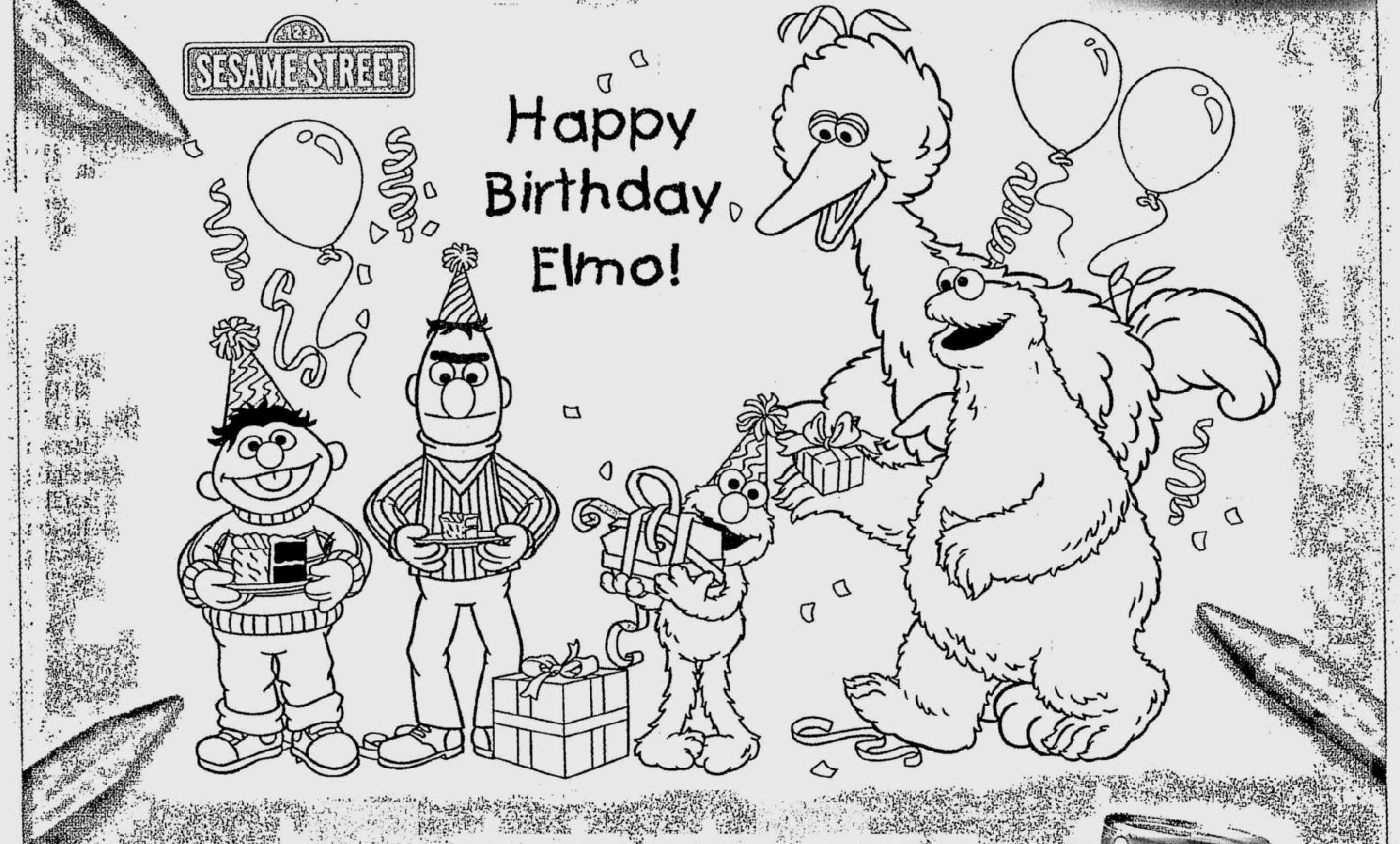
COLOR ME ELMO!

SESAME STREET



COLOR THIS AND GET THE CHANCE TO JOIN ELMO'S BIRTHDAY PARTY AT THE SM MEGAMALL ATRIUM ON FEB. 23, 2003 AND WIN SPECIAL PRIZES.

Meet & Greet Elmo
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SM Department Store
Character Shop Section.
See posters for details.

1. Print ad coloring contest is open to kids 2-12 years of age, boys and girls.
2. Color Elmo and the SESAME STREET characters and fill-out the entry form below.
3. Send the entry form and colored print ad to Marketing Department Purefoods-Hormel Co. 21st Flr. JMT Corporate Condominium, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.
4. Make sure you submit your entries before Feb. 23, 2003.

Name: ______________________ **Age:** ______________________

Home Address: ______________________ **Telephone Number:** ______________________

Favorite Sesame Street Character: ______________________ **Favorite Color:** ______________________

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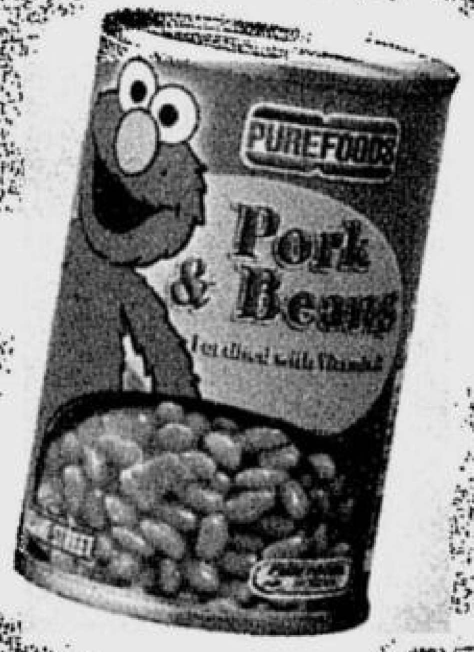

Pork & Beans
Corned Beef
Pork & Beans

A-OK kasama sa Sarap at Saya!

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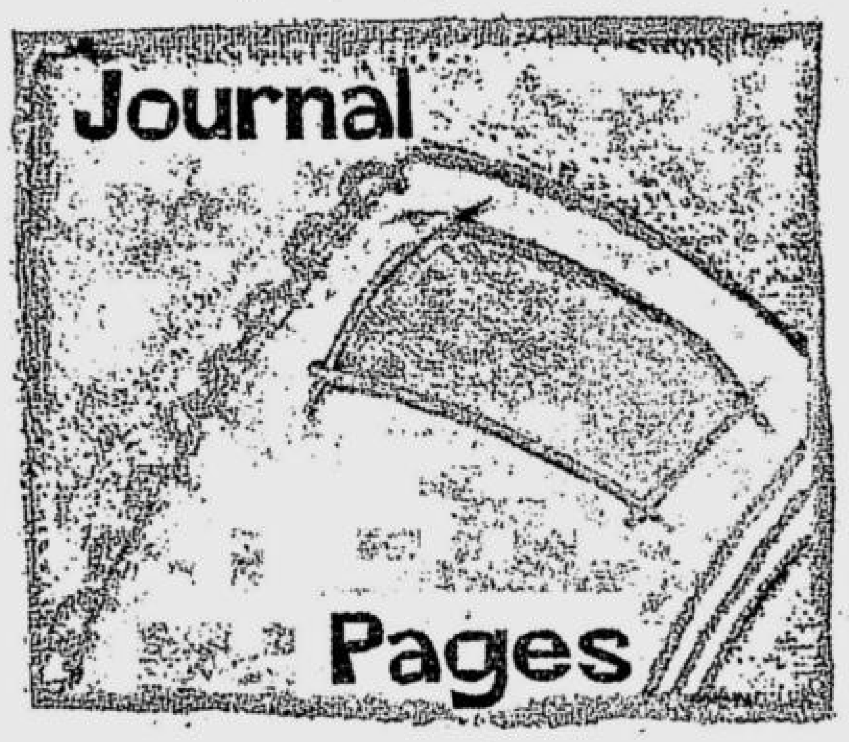


No to War

Dian Reamico
Las Piñas City

I AM a girl who knew nothing about world events until the terrorist attacks in the US on Sept. 11, 2001.

Now another war might happen. This time, it is between the US and Iraq. US President George W. Bush wants to bomb Iraq. The US has such strong political and military force, that I'm afraid he could do anything he wishes. Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, says they are doing nothing wrong.... Is this enough for a war to break loose?

I am afraid that millions of children all over the world will be affected if this war starts. They will see it on TV. They will hear about it on the radio. Worse, some might even live the war and lose their lives and the lives of their families.

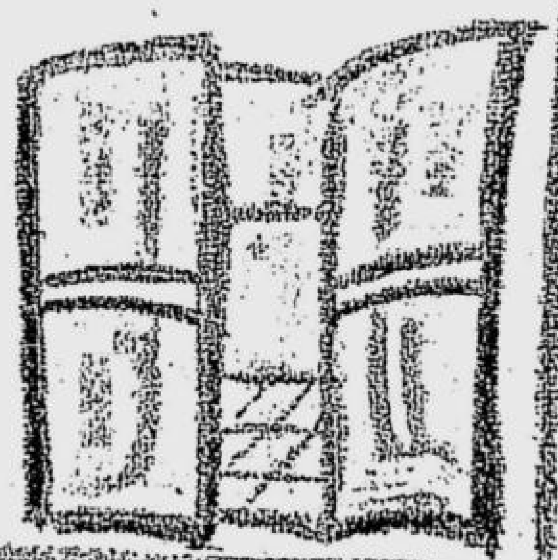
If you read this, I hope I can convince you not to support this war. I also hope that you can help me convince other people to say no to war. I hope our president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, will hear us out and be brave enough to support peace and listen to those who love peace.

Sound Familiar ?

Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



Worldscope Fan

DEAR Editor,

"Worldscope" really helps me a lot, especially in discussions in our class. Whenever my teacher asks us to research facts about different places, I already know I can depend on JI. It's fun knowing quirky info about various countries. Every feature is equivalent to an unforgettable trip around the globe.

When will you have another selection for a new batch of JI correspondents? Who knows? Maybe we'll be future Stanly Galo Sys, Marielle Dela Cruzes or Stephanie Ferrers.—**LEO MARVIN BALANTE**, 14, Pateros Catholic School, Metro Manila

Dear Leo,

Just wait for our announcement. I can't tell you for sure right now when the next exam will be. But thanks for your sweet letter!–The Editor

Math is not a Monster!

It is very alarming that most of the kids my age find the subject, Math, very difficult. Hey, it is not at all! All you need is good study habits. If you let Math intimidate you now, you might think it's hard for the rest of your life. Try studying regularly. Surely your grades will improve. Believe me! I tried doing the same thing, and it worked! I even got a "Senator Kiko Pangilinan Gold Medal" and became valedictorian of our class in grade school. And I am proud of it! Try my tip and, who knows, you might be your class valedictorian someday!—**ERICA GAPAS**, 13, Our Lady of Pilar Montessori, Las Piñas

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Journal Pages

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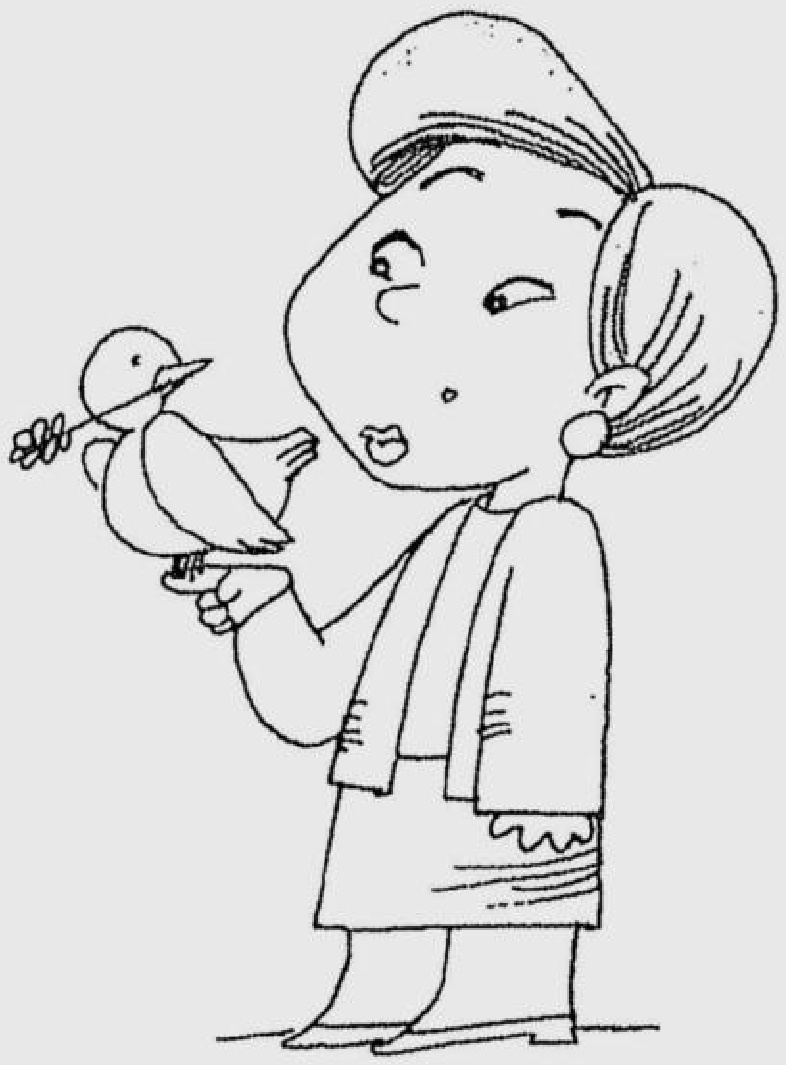
Las Piñas City



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Soun

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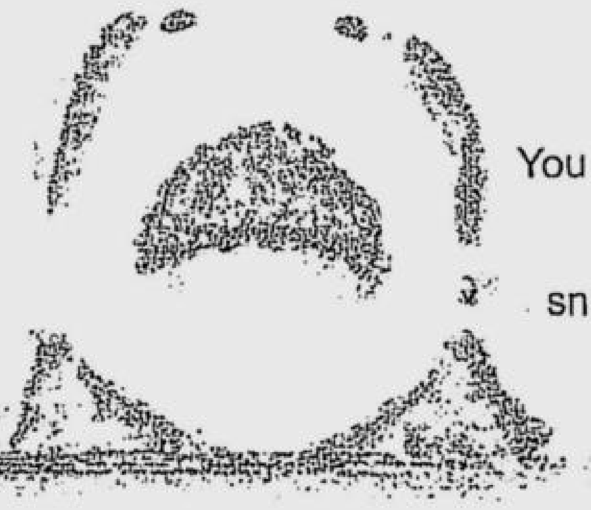
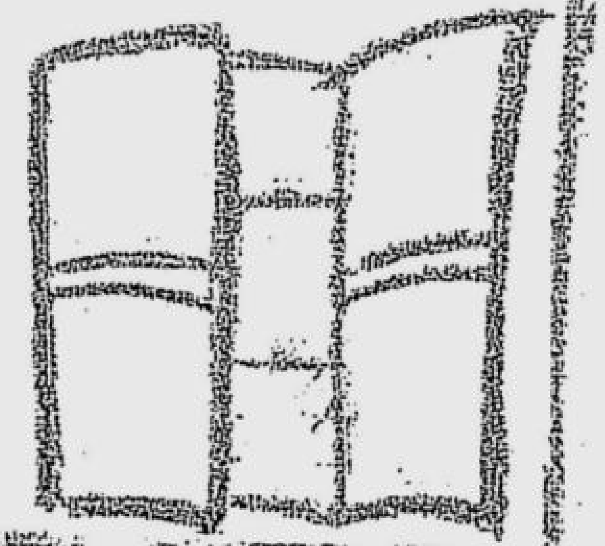
Straight from JI Readers



You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



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Just wait for our announcement. I can't tell you for sure right now when the next exam will be. But thanks for your sweet letter!--The Editor

Math is not a Monster!

It is very alarming that most of the kids my age find the subject, Math, very difficult. Hey, it is not at all! All you need is good study habits. If you let Math intimidate you now, you might think it's hard for the rest of your life. Try studying regularly. Surely your grades will improve. Believe me! I tried doing the same thing, and it worked! I even got a "Senator Kiko Pangilinan Gold Medal" and became valedictorian of our class in grade school. And I am proud of it! Try my tip and, who knows, you might be your class valedictorian someday!—**ERICA GAPAS**, 13, Our Lady of Pilar Montessori, Las Piñas

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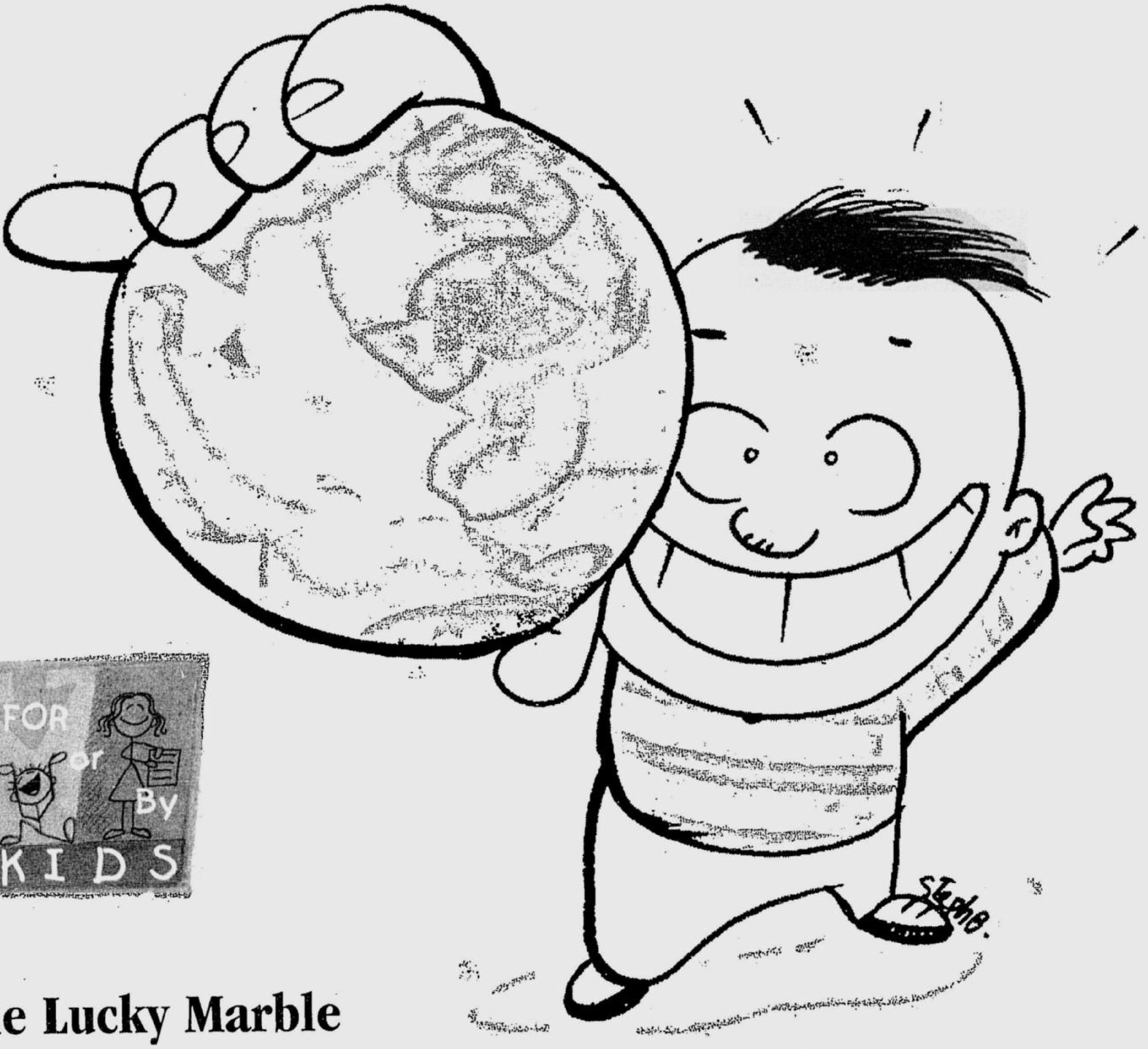


FOR or By KIDS

The Lucky Marble

A Short, Short Story by Jesus Raphael D. Santos
Illustration by Stephanie Bravo

ONCE there was a boy named Billy. He was bored so he went outside to play with his friends.

When he was outside, he played marbles with his friend. He used his lucky marble. When it was his turn, his marble slipped out of his hand.

His marble went down the manhole. Then he followed his marble. When he was down the manhole, he pulled out of his pocket a small flashlight so that he could see in the dark.

Then he traveled down the manhole. He was scared that there might be a ghost there. Then he found his marble at the end of the manhole.

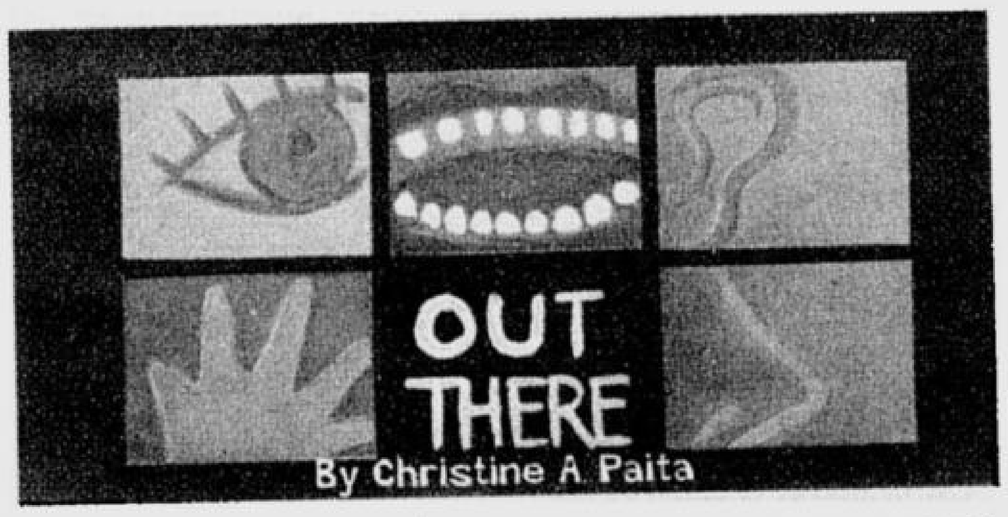
Then, when he was about to go back, his flashlight ran out of battery. When he was in the middle of the sewer (or in the manhole), his foot slipped and he almost drowned.

Luckily, he was able to get up and he saw a light in front of him. He ran towards it and then he was able to get out of the manhole.

-The End-

Jesus Raphael *studies at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.*

Steph *used to swap and play Game and Watch with her classmates when she got bored in school. Her favorite games were Popeye and Octopus.*

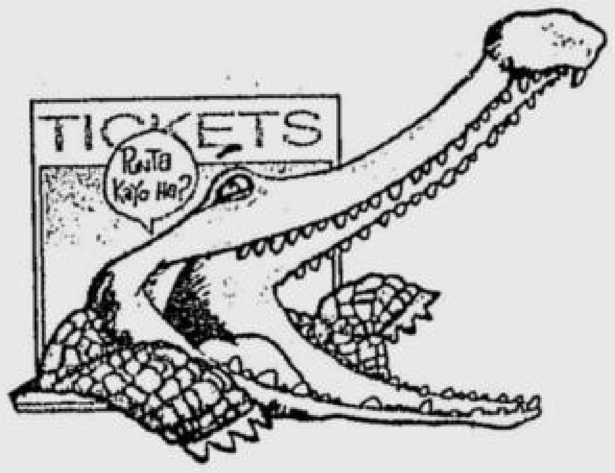

OUT THERE
By Christine A Paita

Workshop

WANT TO BE PART OF A CHORUS? Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio invites kids ages 8-12 to join its auditions for chorus classes. Audition is on Saturdays, ongoing this February until March 1. Please call Melissa at 844-3330 or 843-2874 for more details.

Contest

DRAW THE SUPERCROC. Join FedEx's Children's Art Contest on the SuperCroc. The contest is open to all elementary students, who may join either Category A (Grades 1-3) or Category B (Grades 4-6). Students must draw the SuperCroc visiting one of the following cities: Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Bangkok and Manila. The drawing must include a famous landmark of the city. Send your entries to Marketing Department, FedEx Bldg., 4th Flr., Cargohaus, Brgy. Vitalez, NAIA Complex, Parañaque City. Deadline for submission is on Feb. 19. For inquiries, please contact Nikki Dizon or Amabelle Dudas at 879-4493 or 879-4490, or e-mail ndizon@af2100.com or adudas@af2100.com. Log on to www.supercrocmanila.com for more info.


TICKETS
Paita Kayo Ho?

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax number is 897-4794, and our e-mail address is pr_junior_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Events

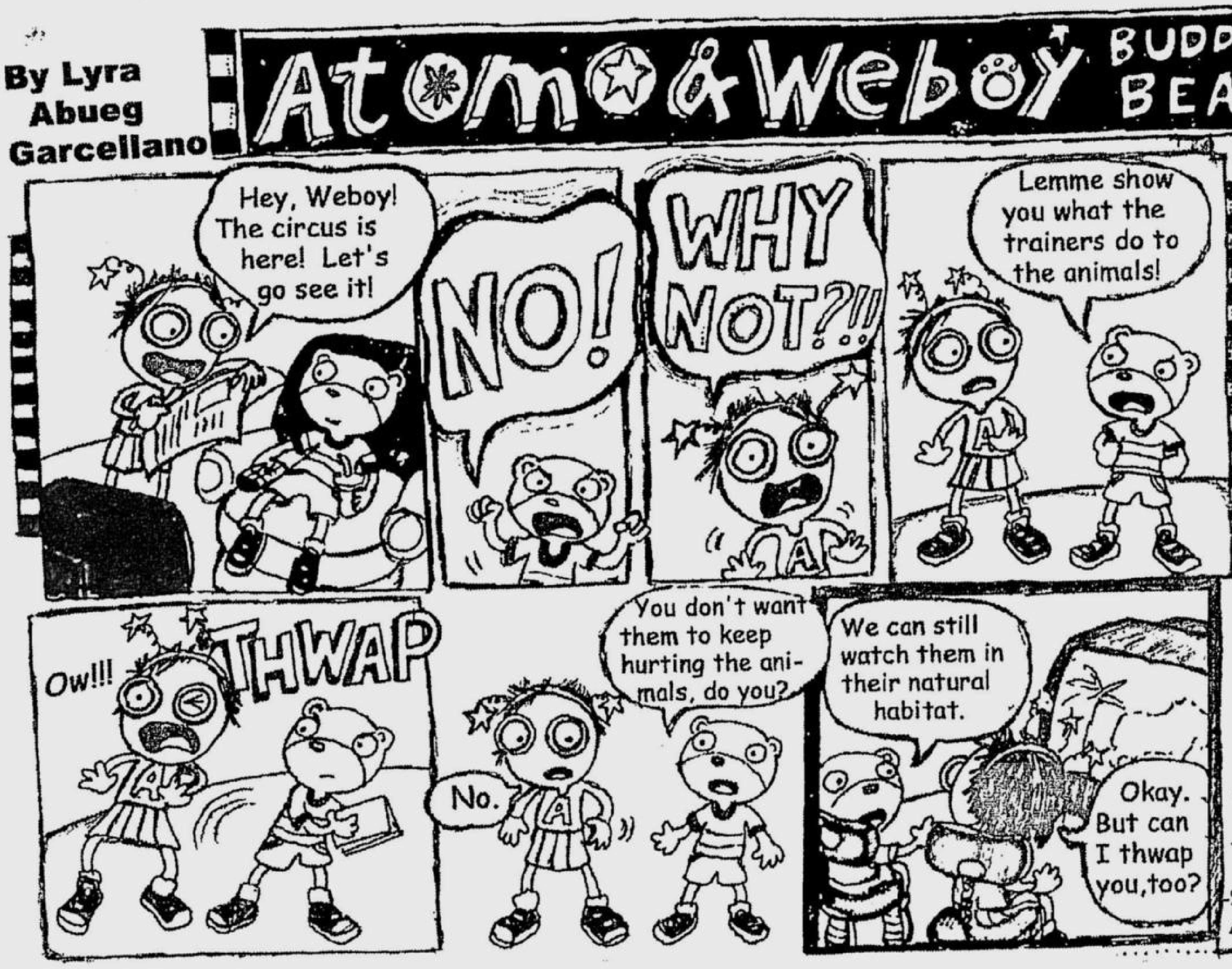
MEET ONE GIANT CROC! Imagine a crocodile the length of a city bus! That's what kids and parents can expect at the Super Croc exhibit at the Carousel Court, Festival Supermall, Alabang, Muntinlupa City until Feb. 24. The exhibit will feature life-size recreations of the crocodilian giant. "Super Croc" will also air on March 4 at 7 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel.

WHAT'S UP AT MUSEO PAMBATA? Celebrate Valentine's Day at Museo Pambata with a special concert featuring pianist Jonathan Coo and many other artists, today, 3 p.m. at the Karapatan Hall. For more info, call 523-1797 to 98. You may also send a fax message to 522-1246, or e-mail pr-prog@museopambata.org.

STORYTELLING AT STARLAND. Starland theme park and resort invites kids to its storytelling activity on Feb. 16 at 3 p.m. Starland theme park and resort is located at the 4th Level, Metropolis Star, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. For details, please call 850-4283 or 85.

Out/ p. 8

By Lyra Abueg Garcellano


Atomo & Weboy BUDDHA BEAR
Hey, Weboy! The circus is here! Let's go see it!
NO!
WHY NOT?!!
Lemme show you what the trainers do to the animals!
Ow!!!
THWAP
No.
You don't want them to keep hurting the animals, do you?
We can still watch them in their natural habitat.
Okay. But can I thwap you, too?

Spread the Love!

MATCH THESE MOMMA AND POPPA ANIMALS WITH THEIR BABIES:

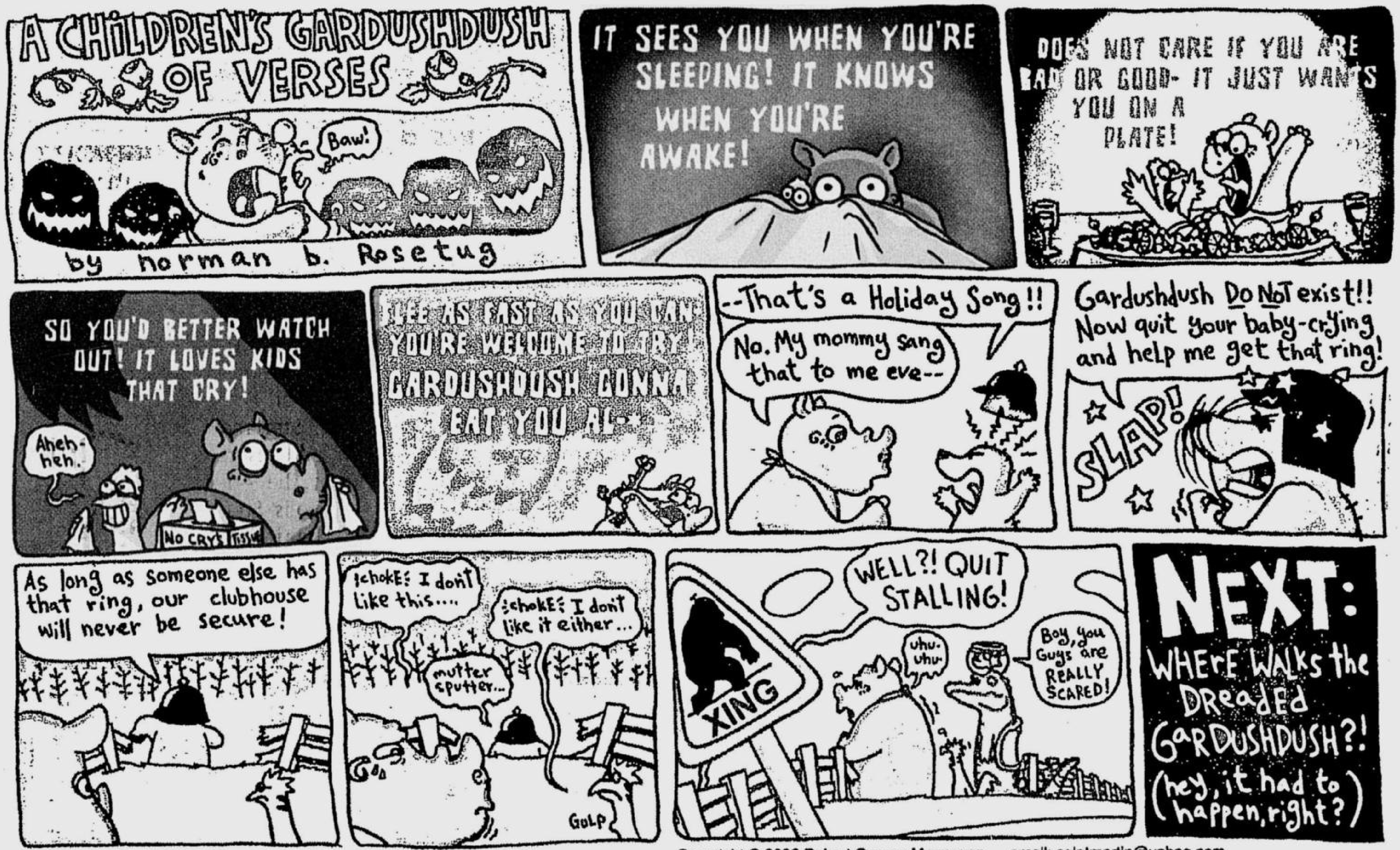
Bear
Cat
Dog
Kangaroo
Whale
Frog
Pig
Goat
Seal
Fly
Mosquito

Calf
Kid
Piglet
Cub
Kitten
Maggot
Joey
Larva
Pup
Puppy
Tadpole

• • • • • • • • • • •

Bear-Cub, Cat-Kitten, Dog-Puppy Kangaroo-Joey, Whale-Calf, Frog-Tadpole, Pig-Piglet, Goat-Kid, Seal-Pup, Fly-Maggot, Mosquito-Larva

Last Episode: Upon seeing Sinatra's abominable face, Shirley has decided to take her to the Vet. For Sinatra, however, this is the last straw! She forces their taxi off the road and flees into the woods. As Shirley runs after her, the rival animal team arrives and debates whether or not they too should follow...


A CHILDREN'S GARDUSHDUSH OF VERSES
Baw!
by norman b. Rosetug
IT SEES YOU WHEN YOU'RE SLEEPING! IT KNOWS WHEN YOU'RE AWAKE!
DOES NOT CARE IF YOU ARE BAD OR GOOD- IT JUST WANTS YOU ON A PLATE!
SO YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT! IT LOVES KIDS THAT CRY!
Aheh-heh..
NO CRYS TISSUE
FLEE AS FAST AS YOU CAN YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY! GARDUSHDUSH GONNA EAT YOU AL--
--That's a Holiday Song!!
No. My mommy sang that to me eve--
Gardushdush DO NOT exist!! Now quit your baby-crying and help me get that ring!
SLAP!
As long as someone else has that ring, our clubhouse will never be secure!
:choke: I don't like this....
:choke: I don't like it either...
mutter sputter...
GULP
XING
WELL?! QUIT STALLING!
uhu-uhu-
Boy, you Guys are REALLY SCARED!
NEXT: WHERE WALKS the DREADED GARDUSHDUSH?! (hey, it had to happen, right?)

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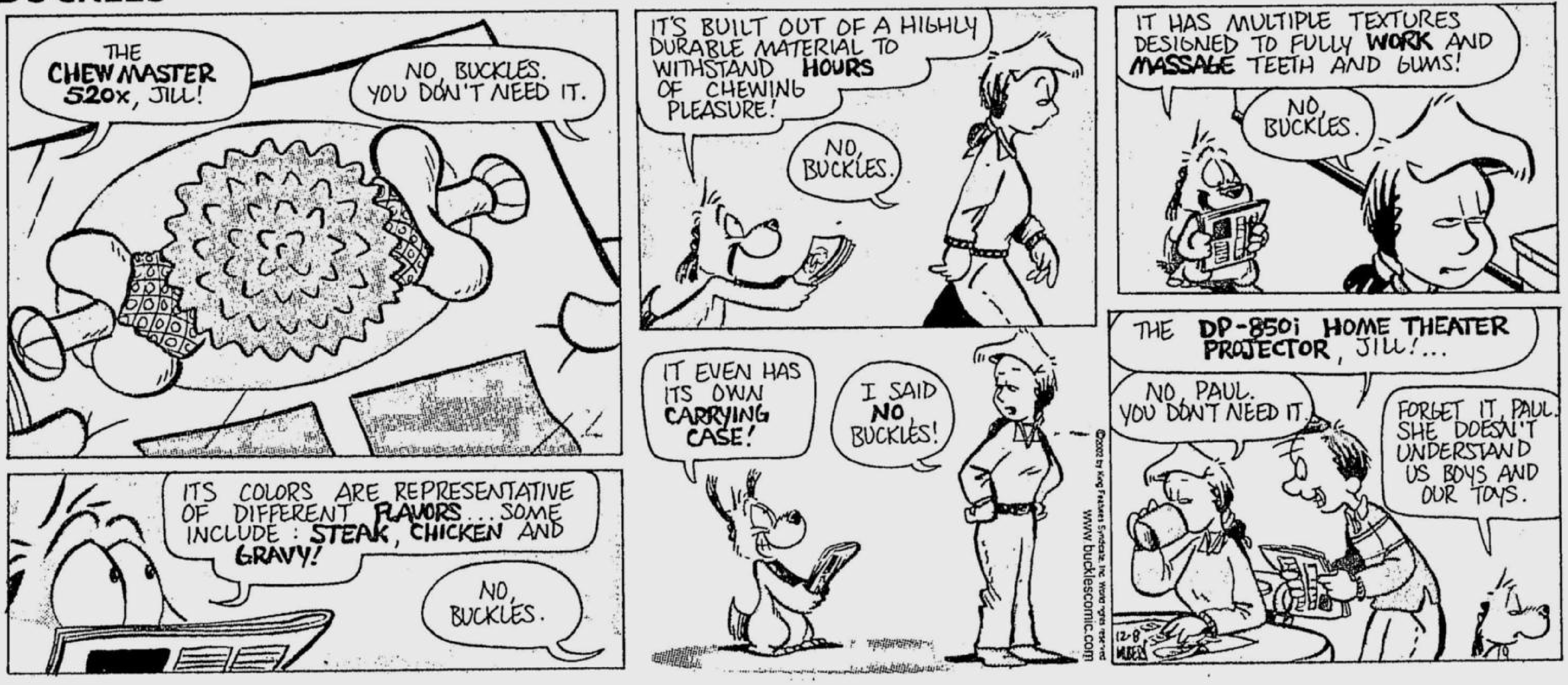
BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


THE CHEWMASTER 520x, JILL!
NO, BUCKLES. YOU DON'T NEED IT.
IT'S BUILT OUT OF A HIGHLY DURABLE MATERIAL TO WITHSTAND HOURS OF CHEWING PLEASURE!
NO, BUCKLES.
IT HAS MULTIPLE TEXTURES DESIGNED TO FULLY WORK AND MASSAGE TEETH AND GUMS!
NO, BUCKLES.
ITS COLORS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF DIFFERENT FLAVORS... SOME INCLUDE: STEAK, CHICKEN AND GRAVY!
NO, BUCKLES.
IT EVEN HAS ITS OWN CARRYING CASE!
I SAID NO BUCKLES!
©2002 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved
www.bucklescomic.com
THE DP-850i HOME THEATER PROJECTOR, JILL!...
NO, PAUL. YOU DON'T NEED IT.
FORGET IT, PAUL. SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND US BOYS AND OUR TOYS.
12-8

Busy in School

(from page 1)

Sticky tikoy is served for the family to stick together.

Not everybody likes it though. "Tikoy is oily and makes us fat," grimaces seventh-grader Ronald Tan. Maybe he just had too much of it already.

A Mini-Philippines in Elizabeth Seton School

HONEY, I shrunk the country!

That's what Elizabeth Seton School kids, parents and teachers did: shrunk a location in the Philippines and put it into their classrooms.

Each classroom had dioramas or miniature versions of places in their assigned province. They also had different artifacts, reading materials, poetry and other things on display.

The best classrooms won a field trip to Tagaytay and a day off from classes. The lucky grade school winners were sections Bohol, Capiz, Siquijor and Iloilo from the Visayas building. Abra, Marinduque, Apayao, Ifugao, and Nueva Vizcaya were the winners from the Luzon building.

From the northern parts of Luzon down south to Mindanao, walk through Seton and take a tour of the Philippines.

ABRA welcomes you to their winning classroom. MYLES DELFIN

Out There

(from page 6)

Theater

LIGHT-HEARTED MUSICAL FOR KIDS. Artistang Artlets stages "Larawang Kapilas-Puso," a children's musical play based on a romantic Japanese folktale. The play runs at the Rizal Conference Hall, St. Raymound Bldg., University of Sto. Tomas, Manila from Feb. 20-22. For tickets, call Marianne at 0919-8453662 or Madz at 363-8280 or 0920-5652800.

Pop-up Wall Decor with Character Designs

Huggable Stuffed Toys

Handkerchief & Face Towel Sets

Colorful Kiddie Slippers

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Be Elmo's Fun Valentine

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Heart-shaped Balloons

FREE Elmo Stationery for every P300 single purchase of any Sesame Street Items

Promo Period: Now thru Feb. 28

Per DTI NCR Permit No.0444 Series of 2003

Elmo Meet & Greet Activity

Feb.2	SM Harrison	2:00pm - 2:30pm
	SM Makati	4:00pm - 4:30pm
	SM Cubao	5:30pm - 6:00pm
Feb.8	SM Sta. Mesa	3:00pm - 3:30pm
	SM Manila	5:00pm - 5:30pm
Feb.9	SM Las Piñas	3:00pm - 3:30pm
	SM Bicutan	4:00pm - 4:30pm
Feb.15	SM Fairview	3:00pm - 3:30pm
	SM North Edsa	5:00pm - 5:30pm
Feb.16	SM Pampanga	4:00pm - 4:30pm
Feb.22	SM Bacoor	5:00pm - 5:30pm
Feb.23	SM Megamall	3:00pm - 3:30pm

Character Shop

We've got it all for you!

SM DEPARTMENT STORE

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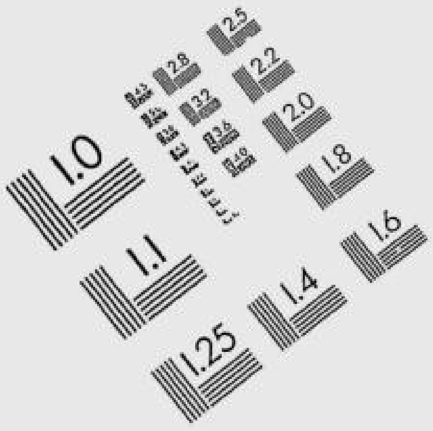
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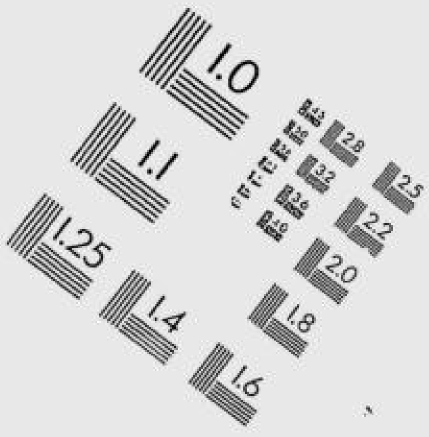
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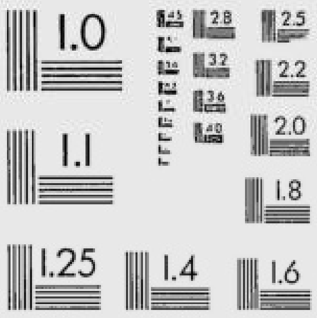
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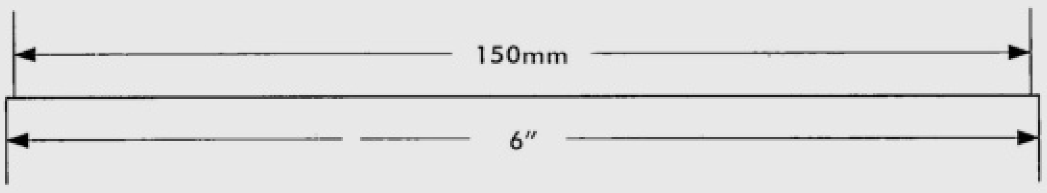

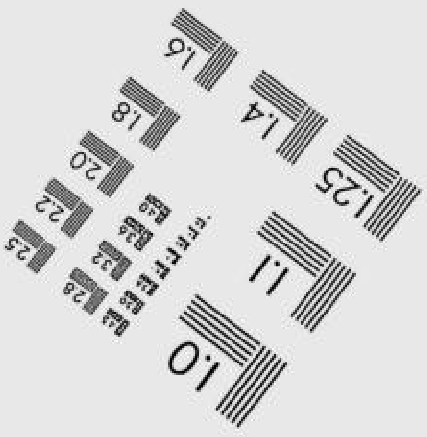
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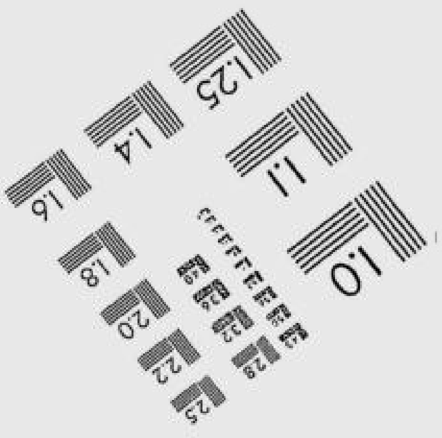
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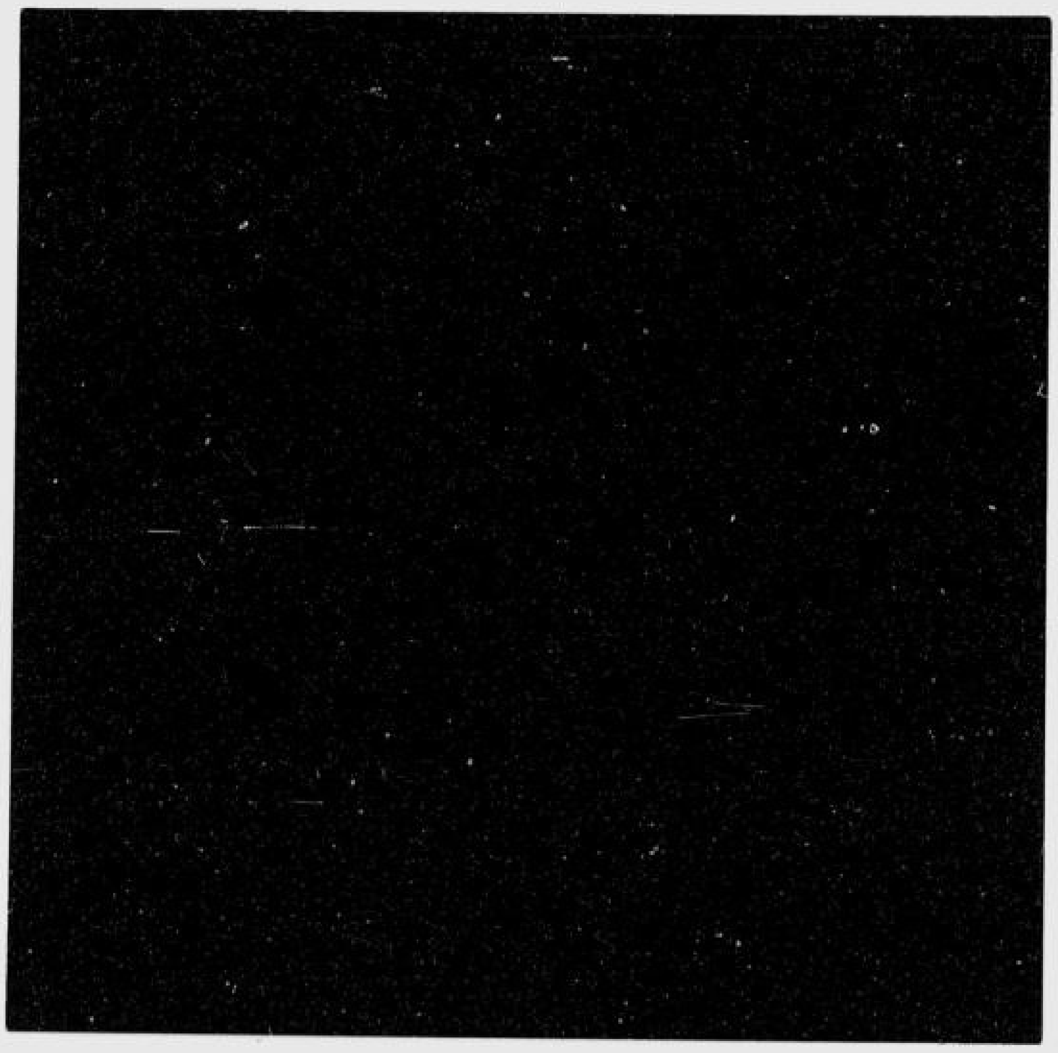

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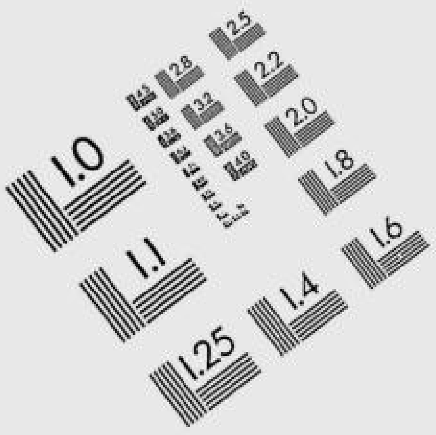

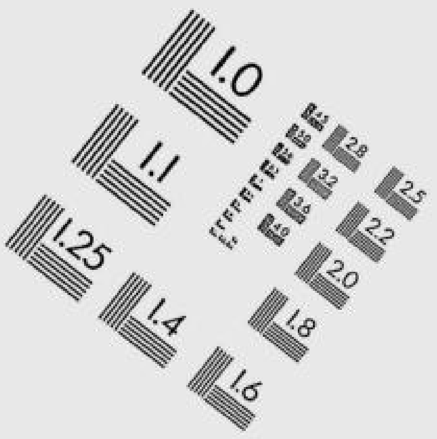

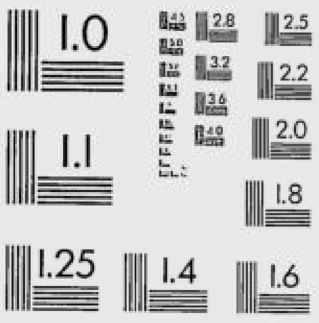
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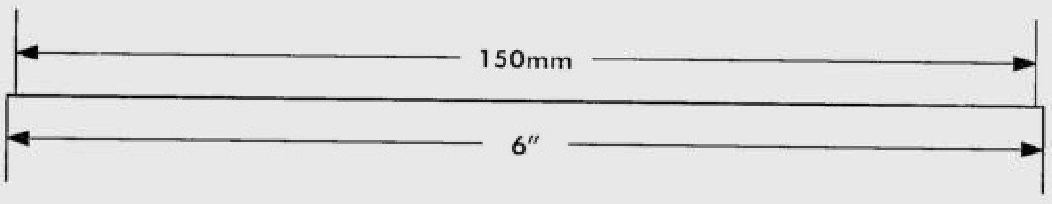

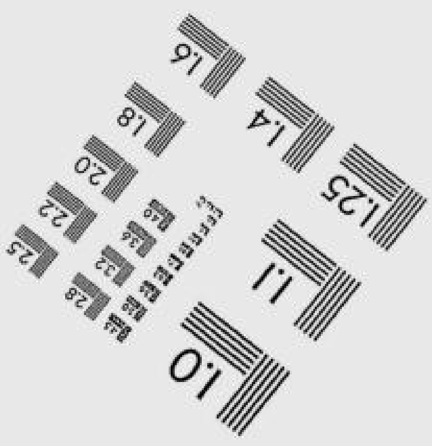

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